"Preach It Again"

B. C. CLAUSEN

Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

presented by

DR. GEORGE E. HARRIS

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

"PREACH IT AGAIN"

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"PREACH IT AGAIN"

THE SERMON TEST

By

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TO
THE KINDEST, WISEST TEACHERS
I EVER HAD
MY CONGREGATION

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PART I

THE TEST

I

WHO KNOWS MOST ABOUT PREACHING?

Obviously, the professor of homiletics. Disguised by a title which is not widely understood, hidden behind a word which has failed to gain entry into the speech of the layman, the professor of homiletics need only be unveiled as a teacher of the art of preaching, and at once he is acclaimed. This age of specialists is sincerely convinced that he who is a specialist, by that very fact knows more about his specialty than those who have competing interests in other directions. So ministers and laymen, true to the convictions of their age, are united in their answer to the question, "Who knows most about preaching?"

Obviously, the professor of homiletics. Years of opportunity for careful study in the restricted field have naturally led him to an eminence as a critic of preaching. He has had unusual occasions for observing various methods and men. He has a library of volumes in which his predecessors and contemporaries, specialists in his own field, have left the vast accumulation of their wisdom. He has read widely in the imposing areas of sermonic literature. He knows the traditions of great preaching. He knows the masterpieces of the

great preachers. Perhaps he has the reassuring memories of days when he did great preaching himself. Out of these elements he has the right to construct a theory of preaching which has extraordinary authority. He can write a book of his own on "How to Preach." He can accept a submitted sermon as good, or reject it as poor. He can suggest changes which he knows will make it better. He knows a good sermon when he hears it because he knows good sermons as such. He has the technical apparatus of criticism.

This commitment to the authority of the specialist in his own field is somewhat less wholehearted in the minds of preachers who have studied homiletics under men who could not preach. It must be somewhat discouraging to build up sermonic ideals at the direction of professors whose study of homiletics has failed to produce successful sermons. But to one who has lived in a land of homiletical instruction bounded on four sides by such master-preachers as Harry Emerson Fosdick, G. Johnston Ross, Hugh Black, and William Mangam Lawrence, specialists have an authority unquestioned. And so firm is our generation in its avowal of specialists, that it is willing to say, without sense of compromise, when faced by a teacher of preaching who cannot preach, "At least, he knows how, even if he cannot!" Obviously, the professor of homiletics is the authority in the realm of preaching.

Next in order to the royal house of professors is the representative of the nobility of the realm—

the preacher himself. Indeed, there are traces of the blue blood of the specialist in his veins. Courses in Hebrew and Greek, Philosophy and History, have not prevented him from devoting considerable attention to the art of preaching. And he has the advantage of a constant check on his theory from the experience of his unfolding Sundays. He has learned at the feet of his chosen experts. He has taken the varying criteria of the differing critical schools, and has made a criterion of his own. True it is that he has little chance to exercise his critical apparatus on the preaching of other men, for most preachers are forced to live through the long years of ardent ministry with less than twenty occasions when they hear another man preach to them. But he can submit his own productions to the standards of his own ideals, and he can judge his work as impartially as human nature will allow one to view the children of one's spirit and brain. Best of all, he can reenforce or contradict that judgment by means of that inner sense which tells him whether a sermon has been a success or not. Did it go well? Did it kindle? Did it leave the preacher feeling like an achiever for the Lord Christ? These questions, which can never be a part of a mere professor's judgment, are constantly entering into a preacher's criticism of his own work, and that to his great advantage.

Does any one else know anything about preaching? Of course, there is the congregation. But all they ever know is what they like, and you are not called into the ministry for the purpose of

tickling ears with sweet sounds. Occasionally a frank, helpful criticism comes to the preacher from a hearer, but for the most part the direct verbal reaction is a gush of silly approval from unthinking souls who greet your prophetic tirades against sin with a light-hearted "What a lovely sermon!" or exhibit the defensive armor of their souls by a coy "I did enjoy that so!" after you have poured a machine-gun shower of cold steel into their particular pew. The real criticisms of thoughtful people are not spoken to the preacher; they are reserved for the family circle gathered about the festive board for Sunday dinner. After all, why should one be particularly eager for the careless judgment of untrained people on a matter of technique? You know a good sermon when you preach one. You may echo the now famous bulletin report of a prominent surgeon, "The operation was a complete success," adding, as if mentioning a matter of incidental interest, "The patient died at 2:12 p. m."

The obvious retort, however, to a surgeon in that highly professional and specialistic mood of technical aloofness, is that no operation can be a complete success if the patient dies. And the obvious reply to a preacher who knows a good sermon when he preaches one, is that it is not a good sermon, whatever he thinks about it, unless his congregation knows it is good when he preaches it. If rhetoric can presume to be the adaptation of subject-matter to the demands and capabilities of the reader or hearer, surely preaching dare propose no meaner

aim than the adaptation of the message of Jesus to the demands and capabilities of the congregations addressed. And one of the disillusionments which every young minister must face is the startling discovery that congregations are not made up of such skilled professional critics as homiletical professors and preachers. He must preach to people who have no critical standards except the disdained likes and dislikes of their untrained minds. He must be effective toward them. And the people are the ultimate critics, the court of first and last appeal.

They are not to be allowed to diagnose and prescribe. They are to have no voice in the antiseptic preparation. They are not to choose the instruments, nor to interfere with the quick skill of the trained hands. Their advice is not to be taken when it flatly contradicts the text-books of surgeons and the best traditions of technique. But they are to be watched for every reaction; their condition is to be carefully noted at frequent intervals; their symptoms are to be recorded and studied. And the results are to be judged as successful or unsuccessful in the terms of the condition of the patient.

The difficulty is that congregations under the knife are so hard to observe with scientific accuracy. The immediate verbal responses are utterly useless as symptoms. You may plant people in various sections of your congregation to listen as people pass out of your doors, and have your spies report their observations. But this is as ungentlemanly as it is ineffective. You may watch the

ebb and flow of your audiences from Sunday to Sunday and keep a thermometer record of the numbers in attendance. But the crowd which comes to hear you this week is no credit to this week's sermon. Rather is it a reflection upon some successful preaching somewhere in the more or less distant past, which has finally fruited in unusual attention. And a catchy title, or an adventitious turn in weather or publicity, may deceive the eager attendance-watcher into wholly erroneous conclusions. Yet the patient must be watched.

This is the story of an attempt to learn what a congregation thought about a year of preaching. That it resulted in an almost complete reversal of expectation is not its least-interesting feature. For the attempt made plain that when a church is consulted frankly and without threat of embarrassment the judgment they render passes without particular favor over sermons which warmed the cockles of the preacher's heart, and selects for honor sermons which failed to please him greatly. Congregations dare to differ with the preacher! And their judgment favors the homiletically incorrect sermon over the homiletically correct. Congregations dare to disagree with professors!

What congregations think about preaching is the ultimate standard. For the sermon may be a very pretty operation. But what happened to the patient?

II

CONSULTING THE ULTIMATE CRITICS

First, you must make sure that your critic will be frank. And this is not a simple matter in a congregation. All year long you have striven to build yourself into the lives of your people. You welcome every new indication of friendship. You make yourself a brother in the family of church affection. Can you, on a given day, at the end of that year, assume a detached air and ask coldly, "What do you think of the preaching up to date?" Can you trust the accuracy of the response? Not if you have observed how difficult it is for any kind friend to become a just critic under any circumstances.

But you do have the right to take your people at their word when they say, on various occasions, "Oh, preach that again!" You do have the right to select a day when you turn on them in friendly mood and say, "Tell me which sermons you want me to repeat, and I shall be happy to preach five of them again." And you do have the right to take their selections as fairly accurate critical judgments on the preaching of the year. Of course, they will have had no opportunity to compare your work with that of other preachers; they cannot express

themselves as to the distance between your sermons at their best and the ideals which they have for preaching; but their votes will be helpful in telling you quite plainly which of your sermons came closest to their mark of effectiveness, and which failed most miserably, with various gradations of effectiveness between the extremes. This is about all a preacher has a right to expect from his first short lesson in the classroom of his new homiletics instructors. Especially when he understands that his critics will be careful in their ballots because they will realize that they must endure the repetition of the sermons chosen. Their votes will have more than academic interest to them. They will be condemning themselves to listen to the sermons which win. The sense of this fate will sober them. They dare not be careless.

The scene was the First Baptist Church of Syracuse, New York. Printed folders had been prepared entitled "The Sermons of the First Year." A paragraph of explanation outlined the plan:

> Ballots will be distributed at both services on Sunday, and the five sermons selected by the congregations of that day will be repreached on five subsequent Sunday nights.

The inside pages of the folder contained a complete list of the sermons preached during the year, arranged in chronological order, with each title numbered for convenience. After each title a sentence of quotation was given, plucked from the sermon

to stimulate a more accurate recollection of the subject-matter.

This is the list. And here is a private experiment for your own satisfaction. Read through the sermon topics and their appended sentences, select from the titles the five in which you are most interested, then compare your choices with the five sermons which a normal congregation selected by their frank, untrammeled votes.

THE SERMONS OF THE FIRST YEAR

1. The Strategy of Foch.
"Remember the Marne and Ferdinand Foch."

2. The Miracle of Me.
"Consider the human machine, 682 miracles in one."

3. A Reply to the Ouija.
"The Ouija tells me that this is a heart-broken, groping, pitiful world."

4. What the World Owes Me.
"I am tired of these so-called self-made men who think the world owes them a regal living."

5. A Labor Day Prescription.
"What we need this day is more labor, and less prescription."

6. Belgium and You.
"Belgium is not a pink spot on a map; Belgium is an ideal in a people's heart."

7. A Preacher Unashamed.
"Before a world of eager claims, I shall never apologize for my profession; nor for that which I profess."

8. Victory.
"The war won for us no new rights; save the right to more and truer world service."

9. If I Were A Freshman.

"I should begin this first year by building here an altar to the God of my life."

10. On Distance in Religion.

"Three Negro songs can teach us the secret of nearness to God."

11. How to Listen to A Sermon.

"Come prepared to do something about it!"

12. The We-ness of Us.

"'He's not heavy, sir. He's my brother!'"

13. How to Make A Pearl.

"A pearl is the garment of patience wrapped around an annoyance."

14. Take Your Choice.

"'I have to live with myself, and so I want to be fit for myself to know.'"

15. How to Make the Sun Stand Still.

"Life can no more be measured by years than milk can be measured by yards; life has length and breadth and depth and height."

16. The Challenge of the Modern Church.

"The church is the surest, quickest way into the greatest battle of the universe."

17. Ambassadors Extraordinary.

"The imperial affairs of the Kingdom are entrusted to you without reserve."

18. My Counsel to Conquerors.

"Forget it; push on!"

19. The Story of The Elijah.

"The gaunt drama of the prophet's life is revealed and vivified in the glorious music."

20. Are We Disappointing Jesus? In The Lord's Prayer.

"I shall never risk the shattering of fellowship by insisting on saying 'debts' when my brother near me says 'trespasses.'"

21. Religion at 21.

"Twenty-one will not be glad in a faith that flaunts prohibitions and negations."

22. A Bible Promise Which You Do Not Believe.

"Are you really confident that God protects from all evil?"

23. Some Heroes and Traitors I Have Known.

"I have had a chance to see both types in action; here are their portraits."

24. Studies From the Stadium.

"Let us put more true football into life."

25. Can A Thoughtful Man Be Thankful Now?

"Come with me through the streets of Syracuse, while I search for the thankful hearts."

26. Today's Pilgrims and Today's Bible.

"There is only one way to join the true Mayflower Society; that is to commit yourself to Mayflower principles."

27. Are We Disappointing Jesus? In Our Baptism.

"If I keep to the proper form, yet libel Christ's spirit in my insistence on that form, then am I no disciple of his."

28. The Holy Sabbath and the Tone of Voice.

"When I observe people deserting this church to attend the movies, I shall not try to close the movies; I shall find out what is wrong with the church."

29. Alpha Kai Omega.

"Behind all appearances, and before all true hopes, is God."

30. How to be a Real Devil.

"The directions are simple and require no change of costume. Pitchforks are unnecessary."

31. Two Ways to the Manger.

"Wise men and shepherds, culture and ruggedness, take differing roads, but they are together at the manger of Jesus."

32. A Background for the Messiah.

"Music, no less than words, makes the Christ seem more near."

33. The Hidden Tragedy of Christmas.

"Not that Jesus the king was unrecognized; but that Jesus the child was neglected."

34. The Year of Jubilee.

"All wrongs forgiven; all slights forgotten; all selfish aims abandoned; God must be served these days."

35. Kings and Priests.

"O, to be a king of my life like Albert; to be a priest for my soul like Mercier!"

36. How It Feels to be a Bankrupt.

"Your assets, if you were sold to the highest bidder, would net 98c in these days of high prices."

37. Life's Honor System.

"No man has a memory good enough to give him confidence as a liar."

38. Poor Richard's Almanac for 1921.

"Steer your life; let not it steer you."

39. Why I Am a Christian.

"Jesus is the fairest, bravest, gentlest, truest figure on the wide horizons of recorded history."

40. What's Wrong With Sin?

"God hates sin because it deceives and hurts men."

41. Why I Am A Baptist.

"I have found a regiment with glorious traditions, fine principles, and sturdy ideals."

42. Says I, to Myself.

"Nine-tenths of a man's life is hidden under the surface; what kind of a man are you when you talk to yourself?"

43. Why I Am A Minister.

"There is a fundamental gift which qualifies a man for the ministry of the word."

44. Are We Disappointing Jesus? In Our Communion.

"Love and I had the wit to win; we drew a circle and shut him in."

45. Christ's Challenge to the College.

"Do you love the things we fight for? And hate the things we fight against? Then join us."

46. The Glory of A Hundred Years.

"This church is the accumulation of the brave words and selfless deeds of the century."

III

WHAT THE CRITICS SAID

Every person entering the church that day was provided with a copy of the list and a printed ballot for the indication of choice. There was a blank space for the number of each sermon selected, dotted lines for the name and address of the voter, and a space for remarks. The plan had been announced in advance on several Sundays, so the congregations were prepared to express their will. The number of choices recorded was 3,062; the total attendance at the two services that day was 3,280. And on the next Sunday night the preacher began his series of five repreached sermons. Meanwhile he had retired to a quiet place, there to classify and reclassify and study the significance of the critical judgments expressed.

What first attracted attention was the fact that no sermon was without votes. Every title on the list had involved sufficient interest so that some one wanted to have it repeated. Such widely scattered returns might seem to indicate that the voting was thoughtless and was striking out in all directions. But an analysis of the votes which appeared in the smaller groups of ballots will readily demonstrate quite the contrary. Care and discrimination were characteristic.

The sermons which were lowest in the balloting were those preached for special occasions. "A Labor Day Prescription" received only ten votes; "A Background for the Messiah" and "The Story of the Elijah" were brief introductory remarks at the opening of choral oratorio programs; "Today's Pilgrims and Today's Bible" was a sermon for Bible Day; and "The Glory of a Hundred Years" was a church centennial address. These sermons lacked favor for an obvious reason: it was generally and properly realized that they were dependent for their effectiveness upon the mood of a special occasion, and the occasion could not be summoned up for the purposes of repetition. But why did anybody vote for such sermons? An examination of the ballots shows how closely the choices followed class interests, and gives us confidence for the attempt in the next chapter to analyze all the ballots in class groupings. The votes for "A Labor Day Prescription" came almost entirely from employers of labor, and a glance at the sentence of quotation will explain the fact. The comments based on oratorios were chosen by members of the choir, who had caught with unusual vividness the thought of the gospel when phrased in the musical vocabulary with which they were familiar. The sermon on the "Pilgrims" had made a special appeal to people who were of New England families and traditions, and the votes showed a definite New England drift. While the centennial sermon proved to be the choice of the old members of the church, in whose minds the old names

and the old years stirred up vivid recollections. Here was a whole group of occasional sermons which should have been utterly ineligible for repetition. Yet the interests of certain special groups were sufficient to overbalance the natural handicaps. In other words, this group of least-favored sermons indicates that without embarrassment or carelessness, people were voting along the lines of their real preferences, which inevitably formed into groups of tastes and interests along class lines. The more subtle differences in group tastes for sermons will be explored later.

When the discourses for special occasions have been eliminated from consideration, it becomes apparent that the least-favored sermons are the war sermons. "Belgium and You," "Victory," "Ambassadors Extraordinary," "Some Heroes and Traitors I Have Known," and "Kings and Priests" were all carefully prepared and well-knit efforts, with the advantage of that vividness of vocabulary and story which could come from a recent and stirring adventure of two years which the preacher spent with the American forces. Indeed two of the war sermons were included in the preacher's list of his own favorites when he made out his ballot. These sermons appeared at intervals throughout the year. Yet wherever the titles appeared on the complete list they were passed by and cut by the voters. Their record in the balloting looks pathetically like the fate of the Democrats in a rock-ribbed Republican township, or vice versa. Some mental enmity overwhelmed them. They

were singled out for the unconscious scorn of neglect. When they did receive support it came from the young business and college men who knew the vocabulary of war and could respond to it with readiness. Whether because an over-supply of war appeals without a background of war experience wore our people into inattention, or because they never have sensed the meaning of war words vividly, the balloting shows that you cannot expect to preach the gospel in the terms of the Great War and succeed with your message. Young men are still eager for an appeal based on war-times, but your congregation, as a whole, will pray to be delivered. The only sermon which had a touch of armies in it and which was not snowed under in the voting was "The Strategy of Foch," and that must attribute its comparative popularity to the fact that it was a study of the soul of the generalissimo and his inspiration for the battle of life. War, as such, is taboo.

But the most astounding feature of all was the way the votes neglected the preacher's favorites and the homiletically correct productions and independently selected sermons on other standards of excellence. These were the five elected sermons, with the number of their supporters:

1. "On Distance in Religion," (No. 10), 231 votes.
2. "The We-ness of Us," (No. 12), 191 votes.
3. "Says I, to Myself," (No. 42), 160 votes.
4. "Take Your Choice," (No. 14), 129 votes.
5. "The Holy Sabbath and the Tone of Voice," (No. 28), 116 votes.

These followed in close succession:

6. "How to Make a Pearl," (No. 13), 108 votes.
7. "Why I am a Christian," (No. 39), 92 votes.
8. "A Preacher Unashamed," (No. 7), 91 votes.
9. "Religion at 21," (No. 21), 89 votes.
10. "How to Make the Sun Stand Still," (No. 15), 79 votes.

Observe the characteristics of the first five candidates on the list. They vary widely, but they are at one in a contradiction of the accepted canons of sermon-building. "On Distance in Religion" was not only overwhelmingly first in the general voting, but when the votes were classified it developed that no group had placed this sermon lower than third, and the four largest groups had given it first place without question. It is a simple talk on intimacy in religious faith, with its text in the words of three Negro slave songs, which were sung by the preacher as he began his discussion. It utilizes the accompanying Scripture lesson only as an incidental and enlightening example. "The We-ness of Us" is a ten-minute Communion Sunday meditation on the oneness of spirit and the brotherliness of love which should characterize the Christian church. "Says I, to Myself" is an application of the results of the new psychoanalysis to the experience of Paul and to the experiences of modern men, and it begins with an outline of the action of two recent plays. "Take Your Choice" is a church school talk prepared for a Rally Day program which took the place of the regular morning service. The title was included in the list for

chronological completeness rather than as an opportunity for selection, and one of the great surprises in the final results was the persistency with which intelligent people insisted on this childish talk as one worthy of repetition. It was only eleven minutes long, and it did not nearly fulfil the schedule requirements of the evening service when it was repeated. But its popularity is a real rebuke. The fifth selection, "The Holy Sabbath and the Tone of Voice" is a defense of the free spirit in religious observances, opening with a simple story of a letter which gained vividness and memorability by the presence of an actual letter which was torn open and read by the preacher, after the manner of the drama.

These sermons were not selected because they contained better thought-material. This broad statement may be made quite confidently. They were surrounded in the list of titles by sermons which represented philosophy quite as sound, logic quite as careful, reading quite as wide, and thought-preparation quite as disciplinary. They were chosen because they were conspicuous for individual traits of style. And the first somber reflection which this experiment provides is this, that a modern congregation places a high premium upon the style of presentation.

It will be noticed that no one of these five sermons starts with a text and proceeds to an exposition nor does one of them start with a topic and proceed to an exploration, after the manner of the old prescriptions in homiletics. Yet they

were surrounded on the list by sermons which tried whole-heartedly to be expositional or topical according to the old categories. For the year's preaching was not an attempt to select a certain type of pulpit work and use it consistently; it was rather an attempt to experiment open-mindedly with various kinds of preaching, and draw what conclusions seemed fair from the facts. The facts are the votes, and the votes seem to prove that whatever homiletical categories and preachers' traditions say, a congregation deliberately prefers sermons which are not strictly expositional and not strictly topical.

Yet it would be unsafe to assume from this that there is a lack of interest in the Bible as the heart of the preacher's message, or in great traditional doctrinal themes for fundamental thinking. It would be much nearer the truth to conclude that people have no aversion to topical and expositional sermons as such; they are surfeited to numbness by an unmitigated and unrelieved succession of sermons in the classic molds of traditional homiletics. They simply cannot approach with attentive interest, nor retain with pleasant vividness, a sermon which is homiletically correct. Most of their sermonic lives are spent in listening to just such sermons Sunday after Sunday. What they must have for renewed enthusiasm is a dash of the new. That this demand leads to foolish sermon-tasting and unworthy sensation-mongering cannot be denied. But this is to the discredit of those modest workmen of the Lord who, lifting skirts in horror at the mention of sensationalism, rush across the

broad avenue of courageous originality into the cool and quiet shade of dulness and mediocre traditionalism. For most Christians, and for most people who seek to know more about Christ, there is only the alternative between the acrobatic idiosyncrasies of Billy Sunday and his hundred imitators on the one hand and the supercilious correctness of "Text, Introduction, Discussion 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and Conclusion," or the steady monotony of "Topic, Platitudes, Concluding Stanza of Old Hymn repeated in Vox Humana" on the other hand. People actually do not hear that to which they do not pay attention. And attention must be taken prisoner by the violence of novelty. When a congregation senses a thing which has never been done before they are in the mood to vote that that same thing be done again. If this be a paradox make the most of it.

The audience does not stop to question the general validity of homiletic rules. It simply indicates that too much is enough, even of the good and the correct. And it substitutes certain requirements of its own, which it urges as valid, and upon which it insists, if it is to respond. These are the specifications of advice which a congregation frankly suggests by 3,000 careful votes:

1. *A sermon must be different!* Perhaps this point has already been stressed overmuch. But it is emphatic in the favorable votes which swarmed to "Distance in Religion." If a reading of the sermon fails to reveal why it should have any special appeal, you have penetrated far into the secret of its success. It is remembered, and quoted, and re-

quested, and pondered, and lived, not because it is an epoch-making sermon, but because *its songs were sung*. The voice of the preacher was not an artistic voice; the songs themselves were plaintive commonplaces of plantation life: but against a long background of spoken sermons, here looms a sermon in which a voice is lifted in song, simply, without apology or announcement. The air becomes electric with anticipation; minds are stimulated into intense application; memories explode into long trains of tenacious association, and the sermon becomes the climax of a year of preaching.

There are absurd extremes into which an unwise seeker after novelty may be lured, and the risk of transmitting such advice about preaching is immense. But the dictum comes direct from the ultimate critics of the art. To refuse to consider it would be unfair to them. When a congregation has a right to speak, it says, so vehemently as to be almost violently, "A sermon must be *different!*"

2. *A sermon must be brief!* The kindly intentioned comments of friendly hearers may woo you into believing that they could have listened to you for hours without tiring, and that they never hear you preach half long enough. But when they tell the secrets of their own hearts, behind the curtain of an impersonal vote, their verdict is vociferous in favor of brevity. A recent letter to "The Outlook," unsigned when published, states that the writer has never, in all his years of experience, heard a sermon that was too short. There is an underlying rumble of implication that he has lis-

tened to many which were too long. And the elevation of the two briefest sermons of the year into the ranks of the first five surely has its significance as a criticism of preaching. Preachers must come to a realization of the disappointing fact that the saturation-point of an average congregation is reached very soon after the sermon begins.

It is not that a group of hearers deliberately resolves to insult a preacher by refusing to listen to him after a certain number of minutes. It is not because their minds are thronged with multitudinous cares which jostle and crowd into the sacred place of the sermon. It is merely that a mass of minds representing various interests and backgrounds reaches a point of utter saturation at a given time in any given event, and after that point has been reached the saturated individuals are wearied into dull perceptions and drowsy inattentiveness. The exact point of saturation cannot be accurately predetermined. One cannot say that twenty minutes is the limit of a successful sermon. The limit is affected by varying factors such as theme, congregation, mental alertness of preacher, atmosphere spiritual, and atmosphere physical. But three thousand votes, which select for places of honor two ten-minute sermons, indicate to the wise preacher that sermons are in general too long. Here is a congregation which lifts into eminence "The We-ness of Us." It is trying desperately to say that a theme briefly treated has an immense advantage in immediate impression and in vivid recollection. A sermon must be *brief!*

3. *A sermon must use the news!* "Says I, to Myself" begins with two anecdotes, gleaned not from "Cut Gems" and similar collections of apt illustrations, but from recent dramatic productions which received wide notice. There is a subtle but appreciated difference between a congregation hearing a sermon-anecdote which it has heard in sermons before and that same congregation hearing sermonic reference to a story or play which it recognizes from the news items of the day. This same distinction is acted upon in the scientific material upon which the sermon is built. The mystery of the subconscious mind has taken its place as one of the few central and almost universal subjects for discussion and thought in modern life. Here is a frank attempt to clothe the old fundamentals of human experience with sin in the phrases of a new and appealing science. It touched off a whole display of memory fireworks, lit by the single fuse of a discussed subject, and it overcame the disadvantage of having been preached only a few days before the voting by the immediate vividness of its appeal. A sermon must *use the news!*

4. *A sermon must be simple!* Nothing but the validity of this principle can account for the favor granted to the talk called "Take Your Choice." This was nothing more pretentious than an attempt to "talk down" to children at a Bible School Rally Day. Surrounded by the regular exercises of a rather long program, which included recitations and departmental songs, and which spread out until perilously near noon, "Take Your Choice," de-

prived of the ordinary preparation of a worshipful service, was forced to batter its way to a hearing through the din of tired children and the confusion of a hurried combination of events. There was no surprise in the whole process of consulting the critics quite so great as the extraordinary willingness of a congregation to hear this effusion again. It succeeded, despite its surroundings, because it was deliberately geared, in simplicity, to the mechanism of the child mind. And its election tells thoughtful preachers that they are wrong in expecting the involved complexities of a month's careful and quiet theological meditation to be transferred to a host of more or less ready minds in the course of a few minutes of verbal expression. Most sermons are too involved in their thought. Most sermons strive to do too much in one discourse. A sermon must be simple!

There are men who preach regularly two sermons on Sunday morning, one called a children's sermon, the other known as the regular sermon. With rather naive wonder they observe that their congregations are tense in attention during the children's sermon. The preachers proudly refer to such comments as this from an elderly deacon, "I enjoyed the children's sermon more than any child in the crowd!" These signs are taken to mean that the inclusion of the children's sermon is a great success. The implied criticism on the regular sermon is rarely taken to heart. When an elderly deacon gets more good out of a children's sermon than a child does, he means that he gets more good out of

that sermon than he does out of the regular sermon. It is evident that the sermon which is aimed at the child hits the target of the adult mind in spite of our intentions, and the latter effort, called the regular sermon and aimed at the adult, finds no mark at all. When, of two sermons, the former is remembered and lived, it is evident that by that token the former is the more successful. And when three thousand ballots select for honor a children's sermon containing little or no "adult strong-meat," while the children's votes pass it over with little favor, the result indicates that we have been wrongly composing our menus. A sermon must be *simple!*

5. *A sermon must be dramatic.* There is no reason for the survival of the preacher in a world of phonographs, wireless transmission, and skilfully written editorial pronouncements, except the drama which the sermon makes possible. Every item in a church service can be reproduced at immensely reduced cost and greatly increased efficiency by the appliances of modern science, except the drama of the sermon. Why not take the few really great preachers of the world and have them preach to all of us on the printed page of widely circulated periodicals, or in that marvelous extension of personality possible through sound-reproducing devices? Such preaching would lack only one thing, the drama of the sermon. Preaching will survive or perish largely on its ability or inability to learn this fifth homiletical principle which its frankest critics prescribe—a sermon must be *dramatic.*

The personality of the preacher must project

itself until the issue which the sermon presents lives in the minds of the hearers. The scenes must be visualized and experienced dramatically by the preacher before they can be fully significant to the audience. The *dramatis personæ* must be assumed by the preacher in turn, as they successively appear, impersonated by him in the realization of their meaning and message. And if the contending forces be as illusive as the "innumerable hosts of light battling against the hosts of darkness" yet the issue must somehow be enacted through the dramatic development of the theme.

This is the lesson of the fifth sermon, "The Holy Sabbath and the Tone of Voice." It started on its course determined to dramatize the old, old discussion of Sabbath observance into a new and moving presentation. Its opening paragraph is a story. The story is not told. A phonograph can tell a story. This story is acted, lived, dramatized. There is a letter in the story. So the preacher prepared in advance, as stage properties are prepared, an envelope containing a letter. And when the time came for the story, he opened the letter as if he were receiving it from a son away at college. The symbolism of the anecdote was preserved through the whole course of the dramatic plot which was called the sermon, and an eager congregation remembered it and asked that it be preached again. A sermon must be *dramatic*. It must utilize dramatic values. It must develop dramatically. It must act out its scenes. It must have its stage properties. It must use vocal capabilities. No preacher would dare so

to counsel his fellows. The extremes toward which this advice points are too terrifyingly absurd. But this is the frank advice of a thoughtful, normal congregation, which is giving its advice unawares. And what they say deserves a hearing.

The whole process of consulting these critics was almost uncanny in its revelations. They were saying things in their ballots which they would not dare say verbally. Indeed the lines on the ballots left for remarks were very rarely used. People do not care to put into words their frank reactions to sermons. But they do put those reactions into votes as frankly and informally and informingly as if you were permitted to peer within and observe what was happening in their minds. And they do put those reactions into deeds, and their busy, judging brains direct them to drift away when you do not interest them. This was an attempt to discover their reactions before they had a chance to drift away. What they conclude is the ultimate criticism of preaching.

IV

THE CRITICS CLASSIFIED

This was a normal slice of life. These hundreds of sermon-connoisseurs were not segregated examples of a single peculiar type. They are proud of their claim to distinction as ordinary people. And en masse they give a correct indication of general conclusions.

The church stands in the heart of a city of nearly two hundred thousand. There are 2,261 members on the church list; a virile church school organization is successfully working on religious education problems; a university two miles away sends in streams of college life, student and faculty; laboring men and cultured savants, business girls and college aristocrats mingle in the pews.

Moreover, the church had just been through a period of two years without a stated pastor. Distinguished and successful preachers had been sought in every direction for the pulpit work of the interval. So a wide variety of preaching from many types of preachers formed the background of the test. The congregation was not reacting from a previous experience of consistent preaching in a single vein. It had been extraordinarily exposed. It had passed through a broad course in modern preaching examples such as is seldom afforded as a preparation for

the exalted and responsible position as critic extraordinary in the art of preaching.

Yet the normality of the whole heterogeneous congregation is only one advantage. There was the added fact that this great block of three thousand frank judgments could be broken up and classified. For these votes possessed the ability to tell not only what three thousand plain people prefer in their sermons, but also what sermons make particular appeals to 498 business men, 202 professional men, 907 home women, 436 business women, 136 children, and 883 college and business-school students, 380 of whom were young men.

The examination of these classified verdicts gives us two general conclusions: First, When a sermon is prepared with a specific group in mind it succeeds in attracting the favorable attention of that group, whether the group is named and placed in the limelight of attention or not. It is the custom of this church to make the first Sunday night of each month "Students' Night," with an advertising campaign of posters and blotter-calendars, announcing the special theme, and extending a special invitation to the students. It was no surprise to find that the sermons on these special nights were the favorite selections in the list of students' votes. "Religion at 21," for instance, owes its place in the roll of honor entirely to student ballots, with a slight show of favor on the part of business women who were not much beyond twenty-one. This sermon was preached to students on Students' Night, and it did attract student attention. "If I Were a Freshman," "Studies

from the Stadium," "Life's Honor System," and "Christ's Challenge to the College," all had the benefit of a similar specific appeal. "Poor Richard's Almanac" and "How it Feels to be a Bankrupt" were both frankly announced as business men's sermons, and both succeeded in challenging the favorable attention of the business men to whom they were specifically addressed. There was no surprise in this.

But it was somewhat enlightening to find that students were unerring in their ability to locate and favor student sermons which were not so announced. And other groups were equally canny. Apparently when a preacher plans to adapt his message to the attention of a group, he succeeds in gaining that attention, even if the group has not been informed in advance of his intention. "The Miracle of Me," for instance, was an attempt to explore scientifically the wonders of the human body, in preparation for an insistence on the text, "Ye are the body of Christ." Medical men caught its significance vividly. "What the World Owes Me" exalted the selflessness of true professional ethics as compared with the sordidness of ordinary business methods. If professional men alone had favored this, we might be justified in the cynical conclusion that people enjoy the sermon which pats them caressingly on their backs. But business men, whose standards were being subjected to criticism, ranked this high on their lists as well, indicating that specific application, in a familiar and specific vocabulary, tends to make the most effective impression, even if the ser-

mon does hurt. "How to Make the Sun Stand Still" appears among the first ten on the lists of business men and professional men, and business women. They were not so informed by the preacher, but that sermon had been prepared with their peculiar problems specifically in mind. And "The Strategy of Foch," which was one of the preacher's own favorites, was honored by the attention of one group alone, the young men of the college, who gave it second place in their list, though it appears in no other list among the first ten. By the clairvoyance of their judgment the University men had discovered what the preacher had not told them, that this sermon was first delivered to the student-body of a men's college, and that it was prepared especially for that group. And the preacher was happy to know that his taste in sermons, as well as his inclination, made him kin to the aspiring, open mind of the modern college man. The moral of these facts is a simple one: If you aim your sermon at a group you will hit that group, though they be scattered throughout your auditorium, and though you strive to conceal the anxious direction of your weapon.

But this conclusion follows, as a startling obverse. You will miss your congregation as a whole. No one of the class-aimed and class-favored sermons appears among the first five in the general verdict. Only two appear among the first ten. These two are ranked ninth and tenth. And they are carried through to prominence not because they made a general appeal as well as their specific one, but because the voting strength of their particular con-

stituencies was strong enough to lift them. When you preach in the phrases of medicine you may succeed with your medical men, but the rest of your congregation will be comparatively unmoved. When you preach a student sermon you may gain the attention of students, but you run the risk of wearying your business men. The warning is obvious. Successful preaching must avoid specific group appeals except in extraordinary circumstances. If you can separate your groups on occasions, for specific preaching, you may address them in their own jargons. But the task of the preacher must be to avoid the lures of narrow interests, and to give himself each week to the supplying of the hunger of all. He will never altogether succeed. If, on occasion, he touches many people by his message, he will still be sure that he could have touched some more deeply had he been content to leave others untouched. And he will be led afresh to the conviction that the most effective presentation of the gospel occurs when one man gives all his energy and preparation to the task of speaking of Christ in winning terms to one other man. For the narrower the focus the hotter the rays of the sun's light.

But there is a more and a less to successful preaching. And the more successful preaching is that which leaves the fewest untouched, uninterested, discontented, restless, untempted for another sermon. This adventure with the ultimate critics indicates with certainty which cannot be questioned that the broad human hungers of the whole seeking race are the hungers for the preacher's consideration. And

perhaps great preachers are rare because so few men know the race well enough and the art well enough to make the connection. At least, we who preach as well as we can, dare not beg to be excused from the clear implications of this suggestive evidence.

These are the lists of the first ten sermons selected by the various groups, the titles being placed in order of rank in the voting:

Business Men (498 votes): On Distance in Religion; The We-ness of Us; Says I, to Myself; A Preacher Unashamed; Take Your Choice; What the World Owes Me; Why I am a Minister; How to Make a Pearl; Why I am a Christian; How to Make the Sun Stand Still.

Professional Men (202 votes): On Distance in Religion; The We-ness of Us; The Holy Sabbath and the Tone of Voice; What the World Owes Me; How to Listen to a Sermon; Take Your Choice; Kings and Priests; Says I, to Myself; The Miracle of Me; How to Make the Sun Stand Still.

Women (Home) (907 votes): On Distance in Religion; The We-ness of Us; Says I, to Myself; A Preacher Unashamed; How to Make a Pearl; Take Your Choice; The Holy Sabbath and the Tone of Voice; Why I am a Christian; What the World Owes Me; The Miracle of Me.

Women (Business) (436 votes): On Distance in Religion; The We-ness of Us; Take Your Choice; Says I, to Myself; How to Make a Pearl; The Holy Sabbath and the Tone of Voice; Religion at 21; Why I am a Christian; How to Make the Sun Stand Still; A Preacher Unashamed.

Children (136 votes): On Distance in Religion; The We-ness of Us; Are We Disappointing Jesus in Our Baptism?; Take Your Choice; A Preacher Unashamed; Belgium and You; Kings and Priests; Why I am a Christian; How to Listen to a Sermon; Why I am a Baptist.

Students (Men) (380 votes): Religion at 21; The Strategy of Foch; On Distance in Religion; Says I, to Myself; The We-ness of Us; The Holy Sabbath and the Tone of Voice; Studies from the Stadium; Life's Honor System; Why I am a Minister; The Miracle of Me.

Students (*Women*) (503 votes): The We-ness of Us; Says I, to Myself; On Distance in Religion; Religion at 21; Take Your Choice; How to Make a Pearl; Studies from the Stadium; Life's Honor System; The Holy Sabbath and the Tone of Voice; Why I am a Christian.

The Preacher (1 vote): The Miracle of Me; Belgium and You; The Strategy of Foch; Why I am a Minister; The Holy Sabbath and the Tone of Voice; How to Make the Sun Stand Still; Religion at 21; How to Listen to a Sermon; On Distance in Religion.

And this is their lesson: Men's sermons for men. Fishing vocabulary for fishermen. Philosophy for Athens. Theology for Nicodemus. Well-water conversation for the sinning, thirsting woman with the jar. But for congregations, modern, diversified, searching congregations—the great themes, in the common words of our shared vocabulary, simply and briefly spoken, illumined by a bit of daring newness in manner and flaring enthusiasm in spirit.

Thus speak the ultimate critics. And they know.

V

TITLES AND SO FORTH

There is an art in title-composition. But it can lead an ardent devotee into deep despair and utter confounding.

Many a sermon has suffered because it was announced and remembered (or rather forgotten) by an inept title. Preachers often libel their own productions by the outworn unattractive labels attached. No man can be a truly successful preacher in these days of headlines and headline-appetite, unless he studies the technique which gives his sermon a fair chance in this hurrying world by endowing it with a befitting name.

But many a sermon, good in itself, has gone down under waves of resentment and scorn because it carried too clever a title. The man who spends more time on his heading than he spends on his head-work is guilty of the same foolish sin which has condemned so many manufacturers to dingy failure. The wrapper must not overestimate the goods. There is no fury quite like that of the man who comes lured by a sermon-title and goes away convinced that the preacher is a shrewd "window-trimmer," careless of the chances of a second visit so long as he can lure his customer inside his place of business just once. A title

must be no more and no less than fair. So the ultimate critics say. And a title cannot make a sermon better by being more enticing than the sermon itself. When this phenomenon occurs the sermon effect is ruined, not enhanced.

The leading sermon of the year was one which succeeded in spite of a clumsy title. "On Distance in Religion" is without a sparkle, and its sole virtue is that it does seem somewhat descriptive of the subject-matter. Yet the sermon was chosen overwhelmingly for repetition. There follow nine sermons which had fairly fit and effective titles, and which found no handicaps in their labels. But on the list of unmentioned sermons are many which would be recognized by one who had followed the whole course of the preaching as falling into two classes. One of these classes includes the sermons which suffered from poor titles, such as "Belgium and You" (too indefinite), "The Challenge of the Modern Church" (too bromidic), "Victory" (too laconic), or "Kings and Priests" (too unattractive). The other class is made up of sermons which suffered from good titles, titles which raised expectations which the sermons failed to satisfy. Specifications on this point might prove odious. The principle is clear. And the ballots show that tempting display without a corresponding quality of goods is the most dangerous preaching policy in the world. "Alpha kai Omega" was a case of innocent deception which reveals the principle. The sermon was an exposition of "God—the beginning and the ending," and the Greek letters of

the title were quoted from the context of that reference. But in this city of Greek letter college fraternities, the announced title aroused some expectation that the preacher would deal with the college fraternity problem. With this expectation aroused and confronting him, the preacher might wax ever so eloquently effective over "God—the beginning and the ending," all to no avail. The sermon was ruined before it was preached. It could not have its legitimate effect. If this be true when the deception is wholly without guile, the fact marks a pathway of destruction for the man who deliberately plans to tempt people inside his doors by flamboyant promise in his titles, and then gives them the best he can hurriedly prepare for the anticipating minds. For the congregation unerringly detects and selects for despising scorn the sermons which promised more than they performed.

If the sermons on the accompanying list had been made to bear their dates and occasions it would be easy to notice a fact which, without dates, might escape mention. The effective preaching of the year seems to come in well-marked and restricted periods of time. A mere glance at the results will show that first and second in the balloting were sermons preached on successive Sunday mornings; that on the following Sunday morning the fourth choice was given, and that sixth and tenth in the voting were delivered on the second and third Sunday nights of this distinguished series. Five of the best sermons of the year were preached within the boundaries of two weeks, and the eighth choice

was preached just two weeks before. Then follows a long stretch of comparative mediocrity, broken only by the popularity of "Religion at 21" and "The Holy Sabbath and the Tone of Voice," which were fifth and ninth in the final results, and which came at long intervals. But the third and seventh choices mark another period of effective preaching. For "Why I am a Christian" and "Says I, to Myself" were preached on consecutive Sundays, and they are surrounded by "Why I am a Baptist," "Why I am a Minister," and "Life's Honor System," which occupied eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth places in the final ranking. The chart on which the votes were recorded in the tabulation makes this fact graphically impressive: Good preaching tends to occur in well-defined waves of effectiveness, not sporadic and individual successes separated by periods of commonplaces.

It is probable that this may be explained in part by the physical vigor and mental alertness of the preacher, which reached top heights in periods, and which showed themselves in his pulpit work. Certain it is that a chart of this particular preacher's excess vitality would very closely correspond to the chart of his best sermons. Thus do our new-found critics stress a point which our teachers have never overemphasized: *If you would preach well, keep well.* The difference between a fagged preacher who is trying hard to rally his forces to the demands of a Sunday duty, and a vibrant, exuberant, rested, trained, ready preacher who has deliberately brought himself to top form for the

most important task of his life, is the difference between failure and success. You cannot fool your people by many gestures and the too eager vocal gymnastics of stimulated nerves. They know when you are ready and poised, and they pray to be delivered from a repetition of your exhausted over-painted failures.

But any such explanation leaves out of account that phenomenon which every thoughtful preacher has observed in his own program. There is a momentum in preaching. A failure on one Sunday sets its curse over a number of Sundays to come. And a glorious success on one Sunday spreads its radiance over the preparation and preaching of many succeeding weeks. If there is good advice to be gained from a glance at this obvious fact it is this: *Make every sermon an event.* Be content with no feeble effort. Save nothing for a better chance. Chances become progressively less good as you postpone the delivery of your best. If you have commonplace sermons which might be used on ordinary Sundays, postpone them until you have made them something more than commonplace sermons, or else destroy them and forget them. There are no ordinary Sundays. Every sermon must make an attempt to be your best sermon. There is no gesture so effective in banishing the apathy of blue Monday like the solemn and holy prayer that on the next Sunday it may be our right to show forth Christ more fittingly than ever in our lives before. Preach every sermon as if it were your last sermon.

The plan of the ballots had one unforeseen and

favorable result. It stimulated, beyond all expectation, recollections of the material which entered into the year's preaching. The lists became a focal point for parish conversation. Sermons which had become dim in memory were called up by the effort of the will, and examined for strength or weakness. The whole volume of the pulpit proclamation was renewed in memory. And by that much, what was good in it became new in its effectiveness. No preacher can live through a year without some trace of lament at the fleeting transitoriness of the spoken word. Most of his phrases evaporate almost as quickly as they are spoken. What will he say, then, of a device which teaches him new things about preaching, and at the same time renews the hundreds of preaching impressions which have cost him his life-blood?

Best of all, there is apparent in the congregation an altogether new interest in the sermons now being preached. For it is understood that the selection of five sermons for repetition will be an annual affair, and every sermon which is enjoyed now becomes a candidate for next year's election. People come thronging to the preacher to say, "We have that sermon down for repreaching next year." Rather an adventitious interest, of course, and one not to be rated too highly. But not without its value. For most of us have learned Scripture verses in a game, only to have them recur helpfully in times of need. And there is no doubt about the preacher's choice between having a sermon remembered as a candidate for a forthcoming election

and having a sermon remembered not at all. The method is justified in the result.

If it be feared that people do not care to hear sermons repeated, the experience of this adventure contradicts that fear. It may be safely assumed that people resent an old sermon when they have been led to expect a new one, especially if the old sermon is masquerading under a new title. But when the old one is frankly announced, and especially when they have had a share in the selection of the old one, a surprising interest attaches to the repetition. Russell Conwell, with his six thousandth delivery of "Acres of Diamonds," is an example of the rule. His audiences are made up partly of people who want to know what kind of lecture can survive six thousand presentations; and partly of people who have heard him once or many times before, and who have brought others along to be initiated in the experience. Just so when it is announced that sermons are to be repeated by popular request. A number of people are stirred to interest in a sermon which can be preached twice in the same church. And the people who voted for that sermon immediately assume a certain proprietary interest in it as "their sermon," and may be depended upon to scatter invitations far and wide welcoming their friends to listen. Indeed, it became necessary to announce at the beginning of this series of repetitions that while no one would be barred from the church while there was room, it was requested that only those who had voted for the sermon which was to

be repreached should feel free to invite others. And the auditorium was crowded to the doors.

For the preacher may well learn the lesson which is being forced upon industry. The worker does not want to own and profit, over and above his just deserts. He does want a sense of sharing in the policies and programs of his enterprise. He wants to function as a chooser. So say sociologists. The man in the congregation, likewise, does not want to preach. But he does relish a chance now and then to choose his preaching. He likes to have an opportunity to speak his mind without embarrassment on the subject of the preaching to which he has been exposed. And when his votes have been counted, whether his candidate has won or not, he brings to the church with him the comforting assurance that he has had a part in the decision. These are his sermons. This is his church. This is his kind of a preacher. He, the ultimate critic, has had a chance to speak.

PART II

THE SERMONS

I

ON DISTANCE IN RELIGION

Text: Jesus said unto her, "Thou hast well said, 'I have no husband.' For thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband. In that saidst thou truly."

The woman saith unto him, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."—John 4 : 17-20.

A wise man once said, "If you will let me write the songs of a nation, I care not who writes its laws." It is a significant sentence. But neither laws nor songs are written thus by choice, so the statement, while a wise one, is a harmless matter of theory. A slight change in the epigram, however, transforms it into a practical program of investigation. "If you want to know the character of a nation, listen to its songs, and you need not study its laws."

Grant this dictum to be true. Then study America. What a riotous phantasmagoria of life we sense when we approach America by way of her songs, running the whole gamut from the quiet loveliness of "Silver Threads among the Gold" to the senseless jazz jumble of "Ja-Da," from the inspiring martial spirit of "America, the Beautiful,"

to the crude rot of "Chili Bean." O, my country, study yourself in your songs! And take courage to repent!

Turn from America. Glance for a moment at the Negro race. Listen to the message of their songs. Here are melodies which were not wrought out in the longhand of correct musical notation over the glistening keyboard of a Steinway grand. No cultured mentality supplied intricate harmonies for the plantation songs of the happy wistful South. The simple hymns came welling up, words and music wedded in an ecstacy of faith, perhaps during the lonely hours of a long and solitary night, perhaps in the fevered excitement of a glorious camp-meeting. And having sung themselves into life, they passed into the currency of traditional folk treasure, and became a vivid revelation of the Negro soul.

Here is a quick, syncopated, shuffling tune which makes us see gleaming eyes, white teeth shining against a background of dark skin, and the exaggerated gestures of a mimic people:

> Fo' He sees what you do,
> An' He hears what you say,
> My Lawd am writin' all de time!

Here is a slower plaintive musical phrase, with a tear and a smile in it:

> Ho, Dinah, stop yo' pining,
> Pharaoh's army got drownded!

And here is a minor tragic strain with the quiet sadness of broken hearts resolved into faith by the

beauty of the final measure. See how well it transmits the atmosphere of that gray morning when the weeping woman sought the body of the slain Christ in the garden of tombs:

> Is dere anybuddy here like weepin' Mary?
> Call upon yo' Jesus,
> An' He'll draw near.

They are as different in their message as they are in their mood and their melody. But through them I would have you catch a glimpse of the faith of the Negro. For this is a day in which men are being deluded into a conception of the universe which places the things of religion afar off. And the Negro race has a message for us. For the Negro succeeded in conquering distance in religion.

Take the first of our three songs. Here is a picture of a God with eyes mysteriously watching everywhere, and ears mysteriously listening for each faint whisper—a God who observes the slightest gesture and catches the smallest syllable—a God who has near him a great record-book like a plantation ledger, in which he writes with his own hand the story of the failures and successes of his vagrant creatures.

You may tell me that we have passed beyond such crudities of conception. You may insist that our minds cannot accept such glaring anthropomorphism. The inconceivable star spaces and the infinitesimal revelations of the microscope have spoiled all that. You may point to the philosophical gains which these recent years have registered. You may

sneer at a race which could sum up moral responsibility in the terms of a great balance-book and indelible God-made marks. But the blundering minds which you scorn were sure of one thing, the nearness of God as an inescapable judge. And here the Negro is clearly and triumphantly right!

Every word and deed of your careless sophisticated soul is recorded for the light or the darkness in the eternal balance-books of the vast ages of choice. You can make no decision, however trivial, which does not echo through the halls of unborn generations. Nothing escapes the reckoning. Science asserts it as eloquently as ever did superstition. And if your God has become a far-away abstraction, with no ears for the whispered words of your lonely courage, and no eyes for the tiny defections of your cowardice, you are terribly deluded.

Glance at the figure of the woman at the well. Listen to a few sentences of her conversation with Jesus. He has been speaking with all the impressiveness of his frankness, and she, listening in interest and wonder, has come at last to the conclusion that he must be a prophet. "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." Note now how naively she steers the conversation from her sins—in which a prophet could surely have no interest—to theological discussion, which was exactly the correct field for the prophet in her opinion. "Tell me," says she, "Who is right? He who says we must worship in Jerusalem, or he who says God may be found on this mountain."

Alas! too many moderns follow her. Religion, they say, is to deal with dogma and doctrine and ritual. Prophets are to confine themselves to the abstractions of theology. Preachers have no business meddling with fine points of business and political and private behavior. Let them stick to their lasts. And their lasts are theologies.

The Negro knew better. Faith's language is not fine words, but courage and truth every day. God is not a definition. God is a judge. And religion is that whole fabric of moral issues made up of the trivial conduct of today. "He does see what you do, he does hear what you say," and the motives of our days are tirelessly and accurately recorded for eternity.

Ho, Dinah, stop yo' pining,
Pharaoh's army got drownded!

Strange mixture of comforting advice and ancient miracle narrative, you say. Obviously a song has a right to urge a weary woman to take heart again. But why drag in Pharaoh? What possible connection can there be between Dinah and the raging Egyptian king? And what an absurd old story it is, even if the connection be assumed? A fleeing rabble of slaves find a dry highway through a great sea; the pursuing army comes clanging down into the pathway between the mysteriously walled waters, only to be engulfed when the walls give way and the sea rolls over them. This whole scene might be very real to the untutored

Negro mind; Dinah may be able to hear quite plainly the shouts of Pharaoh's horsemen, the thud of hastening hoofs, the clamor of wheeling chariots, and the soft swish of merciless waters when the fate of a relentless God settled down over his enemies. Dinah may be able to sense the inexpressible jubilation of the "chillun ob Israel," when looking back they saw the wreckage of the menacing army. But that is all part of a past day, you say.

You have come to know that this is a universe of law. Chemical and biological laboratories, mathematics and geology and astronomy have given you confidence in the processes of events. You cannot think of a God who dips his hand into the waters of the Red Sea, and cups the waves back until his people go free. The colors on the picture have grown dim in the years, and the echoes of those ancient sounds are lost.

I shall not argue the point with you, for I know of no means by which I could restore to you the naive expectation of the Negro soul in an unordered universe. And I would not if I could. But when the Negro linked his ancient story with a present discouraged Dinah, he was magnificently right. And it is this power to conquer distance in religion that I covet for you. If God was with Moses, then Dinah in a Southern cotton-field has a right to the privilege of that same strengthening, heartening presence. Your conception of an ordered physical universe may send you to other stories for your most meaningful evidences of triumphing faith. But wherever you find God helping some one, link

Him and his help with your own life's needs. If God made Peter steady, John loving, Paul gentle, Luther unafraid, then stop your pining, and claim his help. No mean armies went crashing down to death under those mysterious waves of a moral God —vacillating fickleness, thundering temper-chariots, wild excesses, and pitiable cowardice—while the lovers of Jesus went gaily on into the promised land of achievement.

I would not have you surrender the splendid confidence in your universe of law. But if your universe places a helping God far back in the ignorant ages, if the Helper of Lincoln and Wesley and Moody is simply an undocketed form of energy or a relic of worn superstition, if there is no place in the intimacy of your life for that friendly power which worketh constantly for good, and in whom all good finds help, then certainly the Negro has a message for you in the sure truth of his blundering faith.

Do you remember the story of that tiny motherless girl, born without sight, and left soon after birth to the care of a sturdy young father? The war came, and the young man enlisted. He found a home in which the little girl could be placed, packed up her poor possessions in a bundle, and made ready to take her to the selected place. A rainy day, with a stormy wind blowing. The two walk hand in hand down the hall of their own humble home to the doorway. Then out into the street. The arms of the father reach down and lift the tiny girl, the bundle is placed in her hands, and

he says through his sobs: "It's a bad day, dear. You carry this. And I'll carry you!"

It was this nearness which the Negro achieved. Whatever his burdens, he could always hear a friendly voice saying, "You carry this, and I'll carry you." God was near, was present, in helpfulness, for those who tried to serve and trust him. You may pity his ignorance, you may quarrel with his tiny, variable universe, but you must respect the ultimate assurance of his faith. And that faith may be yours. So, Dinah, stop your pining; you have seen armies get 'drownded!'

But if this generation needs the rebuke of the Negro's assurance, as he sings of a God who is near as a judge and present in every time of need with help, we need still more the rebuke of the third plaintive spiritual, a haunting melancholy strain which recreates the misty discouragement of Jesus' tomb.

> Is dere anybuddy here like weepin' Mary?
> Call upon yo' Jesus,
> An' he'll draw near.

For I would have you notice that the eloquently emphasized word in the bare arrangement of the sentence, and even more conspicuously in the unmistakable phrasing of the music, is the adverb "here." The Negro has triumphed again over distance in religion. When he urges the comforting help of his Lord he is not exhorting far-off mission fields and almond-eyed heathen. "Is dere any-

buddy HERE?" Right here, in this row of plantation huts. Right here in this camp-meeting. Right here where the song is heard.

You may protest that this particular camp-meeting and this particular plantation made up all the world the Negro knew. He had no realization of millions of people bound together in a social unit of communication and privilege and responsibility by the magic of modern invention. A universal postal system, telegraphy and wireless, an international standard of money-exchange, ease and safety of world travel, the Christian duty toward a non-Christian nation—these items had never occurred to him. Of course, he said "Here," for "Here" was all the world he knew, the only adverb he had the right to use.

And we have gained immeasurably in our conception of the world as a neighborhood, waiting for the touch of Jesus to transform it into a brotherhood. The miracle of modern missions is a matter of wonder and joy to us. Yet I do deplore the fact that in our extended horizons we have lost something of the sense of duty toward those who are *right here*. We preach by paying our preachers to do our preaching for us. We are vicarious evangelists by the liquid magic of money contributed to missionary boards. Great organizations do our testifying for us, when they transmit our impulses to the far corners of a waiting world. Yet—have we ever personally spoken a word of sincere conviction about Jesus to any one person right here?

I yield to no one in my love of preaching. And I am enthusiastic in my praise for the spirit of modern missionary endeavor. But the superb joy of a sermon preached under the blessing of the Lord is a poor thing compared with the satisfaction which comes when one tells another one about Jesus. If the burdens of this church and the complications of its program ever become so pressing that I cannot go into a quiet place with one young man, and there fight out with him through the watches of the night the battle of aspiring faith, I shall resign without delay, and find some quiet country parish, where the breath of Christian life is not denied me. Meanwhile I shall grapple with any one at any time, man to man, on the things of faith. And I shall urge upon you, who have found the mechanism of a fine organization so convenient for the accomplishment of your preaching, the unbelievable happiness, as well as the insistent duty, of saying your frank word for Jesus right here.

People seem to think that it must be easy to preach Christ in Pekin, even if it is hard to talk about him in Syracuse. But nothing happens when you step out upon a foreign shore, save an immediate multiplication of difficulties. Thousands of missionary dollars have been cursed with the insincerity of givers who bought conscience-comfort by their contributions and were silent when Jesus was being mocked in their own presence.

So I cannot leave these three Negro songs—songs which have told us of a conquering of distance, a nearness in the judgment and the mercy and the

mission of God—without asking you who have listened, the question which echoes in our minds.

" Is dere anybuddy here," right here in this silent congregation, seeking like Mary for a Saviour whose triumph you do not know ? Is there anybody here? Call upon your Jesus! Let us seek him together. He'll draw near!

II

THE WE-NESS OF US

Text: And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ.—1 Corinthians 12 : 26, 27.

Pershing was seeking for a key-man. He needed some one to organize and construct the A. E. F. Railway System in France. They sent him Atterbury, who had placed the impress of his life on the Pennsylvania System in the States. And Atterbury made good on the greatest railway task of the generation.

What sort of man was Atterbury? What can he teach the church?

Those who know him best tell us that he is the man who placed the original emphasis on the first person plural pronoun "we." The Pennsylvania was never known as his road. It was not the directors' road, nor the stockholders' road, nor the workers' road. It was OUR road. A good month was our good fortune. WE were congratulated when accidents were few.

They tell a true story of him. An old engineer, after years of clear record, had run into a tragically terrible disaster. The mystery of the accident

seemed impenetrable. The old man himself was a pitiable wreck who jabbered meaninglessly. And only he knew what had happened. The trained investigators could get no sensible word out of him. They gave up the problem. They were utterly baffled. Then Atterbury himself sent for him. A doctor and a nurse brought him to the executive offices. The doctor had a whispered conversation with the railroad head before the engineer was admitted, and he warned Atterbury that an unwise approach to the brooding secret of the man's bewildered mind might turn him into a raving maniac in an instant.

The door into the private office swung open. The old man staggered in and blinked his eyes in dull slowness of recognition. Atterbury walked over to him, placed a hand on his trembling shoulder, looked him straight in the eye, and without affectation said simply, "Well, old man, we've had a run of bad luck, haven't we?" No undue emphasis on the first person plural pronouns. No stressing for dramatic effect. But the poignant sincerity of the sharing was so real that the cloud over the old man's mind was banished, and his eyes gleamed with tears of brotherly confidence as he said, "Yes, Mr. Atterbury, we have!"

Then the whole story came rushing forth, as if those two men had known each other all their lives.

O church of Jesus, I would have you learn the power of we-ness! Nothing was more characteristic of the conquering apostolic church. "Behold, how they love one another," said the pagan scoffers,

and were less sure of their scorn when they observed that enviable love. Common treasures, common duties and debts, common burdens, common joys. Does one member suffer? All the members suffer with it. Is one member honored? All the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ.

O church of Jesus, I would have you pray for we-ness. Those last praying moments of Jesus were full of his earnest petitions that we who were to enter into his gospel might know the victory of oneness, which is the victory of we-ness. The letters of the New Testament have their harmony worked around one central theme: Love one another, love one another. It is the melody of the Christian life. Yet those who name His name are often more critical of each other than are those who have no fellowship with us. The harshest criticism which a preacher encounters comes from members of his church family, not from the armies of darkness who assault the walls. More necessary than that your candidate be elected, more necessary than that your plan of church business be adopted, more necessary than that your doctrinal position be affirmed, is the "we-ness of us." Pray for it, live for it, yield to it.

O church of Jesus, I would have you boast the wonder of we-ness. We prate about our influential men, our social atmosphere, our preacher, our music, our well-equipped building, and our ambitious program. We have only one gift which we can fairly boast, and that boast we dare not make unless we are constantly striving toward the perfection of the

gift in us. We have a right to glad pride in the "we-ness of us."

A Scotch preacher was hurrying over the brow of a hill when he spied down the road a red-faced Scotch lassie toiling up the slope with a bonny baby boy in her arms.

"Girlie, that's a big load for you! He must be pretty heavy!"

"Ah, no, sir. He's not heavy. He's my brother!"

Nothing is heavy, if we are brothers. No loads that we cannot bear. No joys that we cannot share. If—if—we are brothers!

III

SAYS I, TO MYSELF

Text: Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults.—Psalm 19 : 12.

Two modern one-act plays which have been produced in our city recently, have focused our attention on what would otherwise be an impertinent question. "What do you say when you talk to yourself?"

The first of these miniature dramas was entitled "The Bank Account" and was part of the repertoire of the Harvard Dramatic Club. Written by a student, produced and acted by students, it succeeded in preserving the flavor of authentic life largely because it captured the poignant tragedy of deception.

Scene, the living-room of the Bensons' flat. Benson's wife is a rather withered but stylish woman evidently intent on keeping up appearances. She is preparing to start out on an afternoon of bridge-playing with a woman friend. They are discussing the bother of bill-collectors, and are interrupted occasionally by the demands of one or more of that tribe who seem intent upon getting something on account out of Mrs. Benson. In the conversation it develops that Mrs. Benson has been systematically

spending and gambling away the tiny dole of three dollars a week which Benson has been entrusting to her for a savings-deposit. But she keeps the sympathy of her friend who comments caustically on the inability of men to understand. "A woman must have some things!" While the friend is off on an errand for Mrs. Benson, enter Frank Benson himself. Shriveled face and hands, bent back, worn clothes with shiny sleeves, betray the clerk who has been in the treadmill of business. But there is a gleam in his eye which is not characteristic of the type. He has come home, he says, for a celebration. Today is their anniversary. No, not a birthday, nor a wedding date, but the best anniversary in their lives. Twelve years ago today they started their savings-account together, and today it must amount to exactly $3,000, which was the goal of their hopes. He has come home to write a letter to his boss. All through the years he has possessed his soul in patience while "Beefy" Anson, the head of his concern, bullied him. He has come home angry beyond endurance night after night, and has worked off his steam by writing letters which he filed next morning back of an old picture-frame. But these letters were only practise for the one he is planning to write now. Tomorrow he and the Mrs. would start out to find the little chicken-farm of which he had dreamed, and he would be free at last. And this afternoon they are to celebrate together.

She falters that she has an appointment with her friend, but he brushes this aside with a happy laugh, and makes ready to proceed on the lark. Suddenly

she flings herself at his feet and sobs out the terrible news that there isn't enough in the bank, she has spent some of it, there isn't any of it left, not a cent, she has squandered it all. We watch him writhe with the anguish of the unbelievable; then he gains control of himself; the fingers which had been spread out straight and far in the ecstacy of his freedom begin to cramp themselves into fit talons for the inevitable pen; the back bends again as if he is standing over a desk; he moves his right hand in the agony of penmanship; and makes ready to start back with his lunch-pail to the desk and the taunts of "Beefy" Anson.

His retreating steps sound in the hall, and their dull thud sends you off into speculation. What was that foolish woman thinking of through the days of her despicable deception? What was she saying when she talked to herself?

"Overtones" is the title of the second play. Somewhat more skilful and professional in its use of dramatic devices and values, it proceeds at once to the very center of our problem. There are four characters in the piece, Harriet and Margaret, two cultured women engaged in a social call, and Hetty and Maggie, the "primitive selves" of these two. Harriet has married a rich husband, and is living in wealth, after having refused the love of an artist. Margaret has married the artist and is living in the penury of his poverty. She has come to Harriet intent on gaining an order for the painting of a portrait which will mean temporary relief from their financial distress. Harriet is discontented at

the sordidness of her own life and constantly reminiscent of the possibilities of the artist. Both are forced to bluff their way through the conventionalities of an ordinary conversation, but back-stage, their primitive selves, Hetty and Maggie, carry on the brutally frank intercourse of unveneered motives. It is a startling revelation of the contrast between our ordinary street-wear conversation, and that silent drama which is presented when I talk to myself.

I shudder when I remember the two plots and their obvious significance. I pass for a fairly decent fellow. But I blush with shame when I confront the malignant devilishness of my Overtone, my primitive self, my phantom-double, who lurks in the dark shadows of my unexpressed life.

And you who sit so quietly in these orderly pews, I see nothing suspicious in you. Excellent clothes in good repair, careful manners, places made for strangers with elaborate courtesy, voices raised in the melodies of these magnificent hymns, quiet reverence at prayertime.

But when you are alone, when you talk to yourself, what kind of soul do you expose? In the silent play which goes on behind the curtain of your brows, are you hero or coward?

What deceptions haunt you? Have you spoken harshly of some one to another for the sake of the gain accruing to yourself? And are you afraid that those harsh words will some day be checked by the sweet syrup of flattery which you have ladled out to him and his friends? Have you chapters in

your life which must not be placed side by side lest you lose your prestige? Are you keeping back what belongs to another, and covering your sin with the empty gestures of feigned faithfulness? Are you living in the web of bluff, which threatens to strangle you in its coils? O, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practise to deceive! Does your face grow hot and your heart start in spurts as you see yourself tonight?

What ambitions taunt you? You seem to be fairly contented with your life. You are not sour of countenance, nor growling in voice. You say that you might be able to use a little more of what you now have, but on the whole you are satisfied to plod along. But what do you say when you talk to yourself about your ambitions? Whose feet would you trip up, if the tripping would place you in his position? Whose honor would you besmirch if you could achieve his honor? What would you wring from the world if you had the world in your power? What kind of Cæsar would you make? Your boyhood and girlhood hopes of fame and glory as a push-cart pedler or an opera prima donna have faded into absurdity, but what are your dreams, when freed from the bonds of fact, you dare to dream to yourself?

What lusts betray you? You talk the language of gentility, and move in the best circles of society. Nobody ever caught you in crime. You have avoided all penalty. You live surrounded by evidences of trust. But what are your thoughts when you think by yourself? What are the specters which

dog your thoughts in the darkness of the night? What are you planning when you deliberately enter a shadowy theater which has led you by lurid announcements into its gilded gates? To what are you catering when you turn the pages of garish stories, and examine the unworthy hearts of sex-beset heroes and heroines? What kind of brute are you when you are alone, and talk to yourself?

I have not purposely designed this evening of horrors for your own discomfort. But I would strip from you some of that brazen self-confidence which prevents you from sensing your peril until it is too late. Freed from the major outbreaks of crude souls, have you ever prayed to be delivered from your secret sins? Have you been content to harbor unspoken words and unexpressed desires, holding them in the leash of your discipline, feeding them upon the encouragement of quiet, but in reality only making them the more ravenous for the day of destruction?

I have seen men who apparently succeeded in avoiding jail and preserving a good reputation without the power of Jesus. But I have yet to meet a man whose mind was quiet when he talked to himself, who was confident of power over the hidden beasts of his inner self, except by the might of Jesus. It is because all this is so infrequently said that we grow so bold in our poise. But a tiny cross-section of that mute conversation which takes place when you talk to yourself, will send the proudest of you humbly to the feet of that Christ, who can deliver you from that body of death, who conquers all of

life when it is yielded to him. And those of you who have loved him and known him through the long years may love him more truly when you know what beasts he fought and vanquished in your salvation.

I kneel not now to pray that thou
  Make white one single sin,—
I only kneel to thank thee, Lord,
  For what I might have been.

For deeds which sprouted in my heart
  But ne'er to bloom were brought,
For monstrous vices which I slew
  In the shambles of my thought.

Dark seeds the world has never guessed
  By hell and passion bred,
Which never grew beyond the bud
  That cankered in my head.

Some said I was a righteous man!
  Poor fools, the gallows-tree
(If thou hadst let one foot to slip)
  Had grown a limb for me.

So for the man I might have been
  My heart must cease to mourn;
'Twere best to praise the living Lord
  For monsters never born;

To bend the spiritual knee
  (Knowing myself within),
And thank the kind, benignant God
  For what I have not been.

IV

TAKE YOUR CHOICE

Text: Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.—Philippians 4 : 8.

I watched a man in a store window the other day. He seemed to be making a man. He took a wax head from one shelf, put it on a pair of cloth-covered shoulders, fixed these shoulders on the top of a wire-framed body, carefully dressed the form in a well-pressed new suit, buttoned a clean white collar around the neck, tied a neat four-in-hand at the proper place and smoothed it down, placed a becoming hat at a fetching angle on the waiting head, put two new shoes under the trouser-legs just where the feet should be; and there stood his man, as complete and natural as if he had just walked into that store-window a few moments before. He did not look at all as if he had been made out of a combination of unattractive elements gathered from the corners of the store. Indeed, he looked a lot better than the men who like me were watching while he was built. His shoes were so

shiny, his clothes so well pressed, his hands so clean, and his face was so intelligent and friendly.

I watched and said to myself, "What fun it would be to make a friend for myself as easily as that!" Think of taking just what things you liked best from everybody you ever knew, and combining them in just the kind of a friend you would most like to have.

What would you select, if you were making a friend for yourself here this morning? Faithfulness, surely. A willingness to be true, whatever happened. No yellow streak of cowardice or weak spirit. But instead true courage and strength of will.

Honesty, surely. For you would not want a friend who would say one thing in your presence, and the opposite thing when you were away. Fairness. Good sportsmanship. The willingness to play the game according to the rules without taking an unfair advantage. The pluck to play harder when things were going wrong with the team. The fine spirit of team-work. You would not want a friend who whined and would not play just because he could not have everything his own way.

A clean mind, surely. No rambling tongue which prided itself on shameful words and dirty stories. No uncontrollable temper which flashed up in storms of destruction. No foolish boasting or bragging. No selfishness which keeps every good thing and refuses to share.

Kindliness and considerateness to older people, surely. No flippant freshness. Courtesy and help-

fulness to all in trouble. He must be the kind of a friend who would help an old lady across a crowded street without showing the least embarrassment. And especially must he know how to treat his father and his mother, so that they will feel he truly loves and honors them.

Why, it seems to me that I can almost see your friend, as you have been making him before my eyes this morning. I like him, too. I like his frank smile, and his clear steady eyes. I like his mannerly quiet voice and his careful speech.

But it all sounds like a fairy tale. Can we really make a friend in that easy and simple way? Yes, you surely can. In fact, all this has been practise for a real piece of friend-making that I want you to do for me before we leave this room.

I am ready to ask you to close your eyes, and keep them closed for just a moment, until I clap my hands three times. Now, at the third clap, I want you to begin to make, out of the things which you have selected as material fitted to the purpose, your own best friend.

Oh, yes, you can do it. Indeed, you must do it, whether you want to or not. For your best friend is nobody else but yourself. You must live with yourself all your life long. Never a day but this friend is with you. Never a night without him. And you have a chance today to begin to make this closest friend of yours exactly the kind of a friend you want him to be. You may begin right now to make him to order.

This is what Paul meant when he wrote the

words which we read a few moments ago as our text. It seemed like a long, long sentence. But what he meant can be told very simply. If you see anything in anybody's life that you would wish could be in the life of your best friend, just take it for yourself and make it over into a part of you. If you see a boy who plays the game fairly, and you admire that kind of a friend, make that good sportsmanship a part of your own best friend, yourself. If you like dependable honesty when you see it in some one else, you must realize that you must train yourself to be true to yourself. For the most disappointing thing in all the world is to wake up some day and find that you cannot trust yourself, that you cannot believe what you yourself are saying. When your closest friend goes back on you, you may well be discouraged. And your closest friend is yourself.

So take your choice of things you would like in your friend. Then build those things patiently, one by one, into your life. Some day, you will find that you have succeeded in making a friend of whom you can be proud, for whom you need never apologize, on whom you can depend with all your confidence—yourself. And not the least part of your pride will come from the fact that you have made this friend of yours, for yourself.

I have to live with myself and so
I want to be fit for myself to know.
I want to be able as days go by
Always to look myself straight in the eye.
I don't want to stand with the setting sun
And hate myself for the things I have done.

I don't want to keep on a closet shelf
A lot of secrets about myself,
And fool myself as I come and go
Into thinking that nobody else will know
The kind of a man I really am.
I don't want to dress myself up in sham.

I never can hide myself from me;
I see what others can never see.
I know what others can never know.
I have to live with myself and so
Whatever happens, I want to be
Self-respecting and conscience free.[1]

[1] "Myself," by Edgar A. Guest.

V

THE HOLY SABBATH AND THE TONE OF VOICE

Text: And he said unto them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."—Mark 2 : 27.

The dining-room of a well-furnished home. A stout, neatly dressed business man is seated at the table, sorting and reading his morning mail. A show of unusual interest. A knife-blade quickly slits the envelope.

"H'm, something from the boy, eh?" He reads, brows knit. Then goes back to the beginning of the page and reads aloud, gruffly, with eloquently antagonistic emphasis:

DEAR FOLKS:

I find I must have some more money before Saturday if I am to pay up and start the new term clear. I had hoped to get along without asking you for more, and I have tried as hard as I could to stretch what I had, but it did not work. Please send me $25 by return mail.

Your loving son,

JACK.

Every word read with a whip-snap of scorn, but the climax of emphasis on the final helpless words. You can tell by the father's manner that this has been

one of the well-known last straws. He is as sympathetic as he would be to a highwayman.

Enter the mother, a gentle, sweet-faced lady. Seats herself with a pleasant word of greeting, begins her breakfast, then notices the letter and picks it up. Takes the precious epistle tenderly from its envelope and begins to read, first silently, with a glad smile on her lips and in her eyes. Then aloud, every word beautiful with the lovely garment of mother-love:

DEAR FOLKS:

I find I must have some more money before Saturday if I am to pay up and start the new term clear. I had hoped to get along without asking you for more, and I have tried as hard as I could to stretch what I had, but it did not work. Please send me $25 by return mail.

Your loving son,

JACK.

Every word read with the tenderness of sympathy, but the finest tones of adoring motherhood saved for the last words. "Poor, dear boy," she sighs.

Father glances up from his paper, wipes a threatened tear from his eye, and says humbly, "Let's see, how much was it he wanted?"

So much, you see, depends upon the tone of voice.

I think the Holy Sabbath has suffered from a tone of voice. Since the dawn of recorded religious history, there have been two schools of thought about the sacred day. The first is represented best by that stern word "laws." For the laws had an obvious duty toward a sacred day. If one day in seven is to be considered holy, it becomes necessary

for the laws to state plainly the list of things which must not be done on the Sabbath. There are unrighteous deeds which would mar the day, there are boisterous exercises which would interfere with those who had the right to all the holiness which they could get out of the Sabbath. So the laws must present a code of correct and incorrect behavior for all who live under the shadow of the Sabbath. Men must be taught that the preservation of sacredness depends upon a certain will to conformity. They cannot be allowed to do their own sweet will, lest that will should menace the Sabbath. And these laws must be kept strictly up to date, for each new generation will be tempted to engage in the unholy sport of discovering its own new way to circumvent the existing conventions of behavior. So unless holy men who respect the traditions will consecrate themselves to the task of guarding the integrity of the laws, the Sabbath will be despoiled. Men must be appointed to keep pace with each new device of deviltry and check it by a new prohibition. The ingenuity of the evaders must be matched by an ingenuity of law, which will keep careless ones in a sacred mood on a sacred day whether they want to be or not.

Hence the Scribes and Pharisees, with their careful codes and their merciless traditions. Hence the care-free boasting cleverness of Sabbath violations which came within the letter of the law. Hence a new law which should prohibit the newly discovered type of violation. Hence the interlined, and corrected and recorrected, but never embarrassed, laws

of the Sabbath. And hence the spirit of the Blue Laws, which continue to assert in the tradition of the Torah that if a day is sacred there are certain things no man can do, and there are certain penalties definitely affixed if he does them.

I have heard people tell of modern homes which represent the law side of the Sabbath. The seventh day is a sort of front parlor, shadowy and uncomfortable, entered only when you are in your best clothes and absolutely subdued in mood. No playing on that day. No reading interesting stories on that day. No friends in on that day. But church, and Sunday school, and after that some pages in the Bible if your young hearts shall so desire, until bedtime ends the dreariness.

In other words the law has made the Holy Day a day of negation. It has become a time of limitation and of extreme care lest those limitations be overstepped. Sunday has become a day of "less" rather than "more"; of restriction rather than liberty; of self-discipline rather than self-expression. And down through the ages this tradition has persisted.

On the other hand, and down through those same ages, there has survived a Sabbath of privilege and joy. The prophets are for the most part in this tradition. It is only a matter of tone of voice, for the duties they observed were exactly the duties which bound the highest legalists, but they called them opportunities instead of duties. You may catch an echo of the division in some of the songs of the church. For this second point of view is

characteristic of the singers. "Welcome, delightful morn,"

> Hail! sacred day of earthly rest,
> From toil and trouble free;
> Hail! day of light that bringest light,
> And joy to me,

"O day of rest and gladness," and

> The dawn of God's dear Sabbath breaks o'er the earth again,
> As some sweet summer morning after a night of pain,

all represent a mood which the laws could not create in a man whose free spirit had been restricted. These hymn-writers were lovers of the day. They were not oppressed by the sense of ceremonial obligation. The Sabbath was not an occasion of negation and hindrance. It was a precious park of privilege and joy, protected from interrupting intrusions by the kind wisdom of a providing God.

The two strains of influence are apparent. But it is somewhat surprising to find where Jesus stands in these traditions. In his name the Sabbath laws are promulgated. Yet he took his place uncompromisingly with the singing prophets of privilege and opportunity. His first serious conflict with the pious souls of his day was concerned with the observation of the Sabbath. And Christ was the accused, the religious leaders were the accusers, the charge was Sabbath-breaking. Out of such a situation he uttered the oft-quoted but still startling words of our text, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

I look back upon my own home and recognize

it as a place where Sunday was as attractive as it could be. The program began with a note of peculiar privilege. Ordinarily, we four boys were not invited to share in the family coffee, but every Sunday morning at the breakfast-table, it was understood without argument that we were to have our own steaming cups of that luring beverage. Across the years, I recall those doses of coffee as comparatively innocuous brews of very pale cambric tea, colored just a tinge by a drop or two from the urn, and sweetened to the point of delight. But the unusual liberty of the performance set the keynote for Sunday. On ordinary days, each boy had one piece of candy after breakfast, from a box which my father kept in his desk drawer. But on Sunday mornings, there were two pieces for each boy, and the box was a new one freshly opened for this momentous and hilarious rite. My father was a busy physician, and the superintendent of our Sunday school. He kept his Sundays clear of all but the most pressing of his professional obligations, and very seldom made a call during the day. He was not the victim of a dour Puritan conscience, nor the oppressed slave under a tyrannous system of cruel laws. He was not obliged to refuse calls on Sunday. But he COULD. And he did. The first day of the week was a long expanse of quiet and rest for him, and I think he was a better physician because Sunday was God's gift of rest to him. Certain I am that the business he lost through the impatience of silly neurotics did not figure as an issue with him. After dinner and Sunday school,

he would gather his four boys on the various peaks and table-lands of a big Morris chair, and would read to them from huge and entrancing picture books—which London publishers once issued annually, designed for just such uses on "Sundays at Home." There is a halo of happiness about my long-lost Sundays which can never be dispelled.

Hence I can feel only pity for those deluded individuals who spend time wrangling over the questions of Sabbath observance. Is it right or wrong for me to read the Sunday paper? That question never occurs to me. Sunday is the one day when I do not have to read the paper, and no one can force me into it against my wishes. On other days, a man may be ashamed of himself if he sallies forth into the world unequipped with the news of the preceding hours. I must read the papers on six days of the week. But I can be free of their clamor on Sunday. And if I fear to miss on Sunday some vital turn of the news, I may, and do, take a Sunday paper which is mailed to me and which arrives on Monday morning, bearing the best possible introduction to another week of news.

Students involve themselves in heated quibbles as to whether or not they sin when they study on Sunday. Most of them do the studying first and then quibble over whether or not it was a sin. The obvious solution to the problem is the simple statement of the unvarnished truth to the effect that Sunday is the one day in the week on which no one can force you to study. I care not who is the professor nor what the difficulties of the course, if you do

good honest work through six days in the week, there will be no disposition to insist upon study on the seventh day. It is the one day protected by barriers which you did not need to erect, and no intruding study can invade the day unless you open the gates and let it in.

The person who takes the clear territory of a wonderful Sunday and deliberately cumbers it with the sooty baggage of every day, is selling a splendid birthright for a mess of pottage. I am not now arguing with those luckless individuals who are caught in the meshes of our industrial order and are forced to work on seven days in a week to earn their bread. I pity them and shall do everything in my power to loose them from their shackles. But I have no pity for the people who are protected from intrusions by the laws of God and the laws of the state, as well as by the social customs of the civilization in which they live, and who deliberately despoil the peculiar beauty of Sunday by an insistence that they have the right to do on Sunday anything which they want to do on any other day and nobody has the right to prevent them. They remind me of the professor who is granted a sabbatical year with full pay for the purposes of recreation and study abroad, and who hangs around the campus all year long, teaching his accustomed classes, performing his regular duties, and loudly asserting that his personal liberty gives him the right to work if he wants to and that no one can prevent him. Or that preacher who goes away in the summertime to escape the pressure of a constant outflow, and has

his date-book all filled out with supply-preaching engagements. Of course, no one has the power to prevent him, and nothing can prevent him, save his own common sense. Sunday is a gift, made for man. Man is a fool if he transforms it into a chore, or hurls it from himself in shallow disgust.

The same principle applies to every moral decision made under the influence of Jesus. Here is a boy who is lured by the bright lights of a city's life. He may erect a net of prohibitions about his life at the forceful insistence of a mastering parent. He may be compelled to stay at home by rigidity of discipline. But today I met a man who had spent three hundred dollars on a wireless set, and his boy could not be driven away when the messages began to come in from the broad-casting stations. Home is no barren place of limitations for that boy. Home is a glorious adventure.

The church finds its halls empty while its people go thronging to the near-by moving-picture houses. Immediately there is a hue and cry for passing a law which will shut those places up on Sunday. Why not exhaust some of our energies in learning the lessons which thronged movie palaces can teach the church? The church must make itself literally more attractive than the world, the flesh, and the devil, or it will deserve its gloomy emptiness.

There is only one recourse left to the man who loves the Sabbath. He cannot force others to share his love by passing laws insisting that there should be no opportunity to enjoy anything except his kind of joy. He must live his joy so really and so viv-

idly, that the tinseled glamors of other happiness may be ashamed before his perfect glee, and men who are seeking for soul satisfaction will come hungering to him who has found it. Meanwhile he will not libel the shrine of his delight by the strident confidence of prohibitory whining, and the long-faced holiness of the guardianship of the law.

Fulness of life, said Jesus. The Sabbath was made for man.

VI

HOW TO MAKE A PEARL

Text: And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.—2 Corinthians 12 : 7-9.

Here are two chapters of an interesting and significant biography.

The blue waters of a summer sea are ruffled by a gentle breeze. Sunshine paints the scene with liquid, dancing gold. Far underneath the glittering wavelets, an oyster is basking in the glorious warmth. On the silent current which envelops him, a tiny grain of gleaming sand is borne along, and is caught in the open shell. It settles into a smooth recess, and the current which has borne it passes on. The day goes, and the night comes. In the stillness of his habitation, a sensation of discomfort penetrates the dull perceptions of our bivalve. Something has entered his life which annoys. There

are sharp edges which make the intruding sand a point of pain. Whatever muscular contractions and expansions are possible, ensue at the behest of this limited organism whose life has been made miserable. If the sand goes floating out and away, there is no more worry. But what if all the efforts to better his surroundings are in vain? What if the legitimate desire for improvement finds no satisfactory outlet in action? What if the sand persists in staying where it is? The oyster, wise far beyond his generation, wastes no time in hot gestures of mad hate against his Creator, does not cherish his enforced limitation as a perfect God-given excuse for an unsuccessful life, does not settle down into complaining irritation and futility. The oyster proceeds to manufacture an exudation of gummy substance, which it spins out around the annoying neighbor. And the sharp points of the intruder are foiled by the protective covering which the oyster himself provides.

The inviting vistas of a jewelry store are busy with patrons. A couple of young people, happy in the ecstacy of new love, are bending over a showcase. She is slipping a circlet of gold over her finger and is watching the translucent beauty of a pearl. He is laughing and listening. "Pearls," she is saying, "are the loveliest things in the world!" She is right. Does she know, I wonder, what makes the beauty of the pearl? Has she sensed the first chapter of this biography? The pearl had its birth in the agony of those summer seas. A pearl is a garment of patience which encloses an annoyance.

Christians, take a lesson from the oyster. There are two ways of dealing with an annoyance. You may fret and worry about it. You may allow the pain of it to penetrate your soul and sour you. You may struggle in frantic and exhausting efforts to remove it, and find your failure translated into self-pity and resentment. You may suffer your life to be limited by its coming, and then point to the annoyance as the reason for your poor failure.

Or you may make a pearl.

Oysters might fairly resent outside advice which urged them deliberately to invite stray grains of sand for the discipline of the annoyance. Oysters deserve every encouragement as they struggle to exclude by all possible gestures of despair the annoyance when it comes. But once its presence has become an established fact, once the grain of sand has taken up its fixed residence beyond the power of the oyster to escape, then there is only one philosophical attitude which any reasonable oyster can take. He must give over the luxury of complaining. He must bend his every effort toward the completion of a pearl.

And thus it is with Christians. The centuries have witnessed too many futile attempts to discipline life by artificially gathering penances and pains. And there have been other hundreds of weak souls, who when confronted with the annoying possibilities of an unwelcome intruder, have solemnly surrendered themselves without a struggle to their bitter fate. But we are now dealing with a problem which assumes the proper responses during these

preliminary stages of reaction. We are assuming that the trouble was given every inducement to pass us by. We are assuming that when it showed a disposition to enter, we used every legitimate device to show that it would receive no mercy from us. We have fought it off as skilfully as we could. We have besought the Lord at least thrice that it be taken from us. And it is still here. Now what shall we do with it?

Make a pearl, Christians!

This course of action would justify itself if only on the ground that it was the only way to gain anything like comfort. If it does not become a pearl, this grating annoyance must remain an annoyance, and the years bring no comforting callousness. Merely as a matter of individual self-protection, a pearl of patience is the only thing.

But on this point we touch ever so lightly, leaving it at once for the more profound truth which Paul makes so real to us in our text. Apparently it never occurred to Paul that pearl-making was the only possible alternative to his own rankling discomfort. He saw what we are so ready to overlook—that pearl-making becomes a testimony to the power of Jesus. For the voice which Paul heard denying him his fervent prayer for relief was a voice which ended by saying, " My strength is made perfect in weakness." An unannoyed Christian cannot perfectly show forth the might of Christ. The white light of Jesus becomes visible to human eyes only as it is diffused by the spectrum of encumbered lives. Your religion is tested and commended

in the eyes of men only when they observe it triumphing over difficulties. Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest on me. The only eloquent lives, in testimony for Christ, are the lives which speak of him amid sobs of anguish, the only lives which exhibit his beauty are the pearl-encircled lives, made radiant by the records of past troubles.

It is the hard battle which tests the regiment, not the easy one. The big game of the season is a big game only because it presents altogether unusual difficulties for the home team. It is the broken sinner that proves the redemption of Jesus. And the greater the trouble which vexes your soul, the surer your testimony to the glory of your Saviour. Make pearls of your troubles, Christians.

For we might as well accept the humbling fact that we cannot effectively talk of our faith except to those whose conflicts we have shared. The vocabulary with which we clothe our belief is limited in its exchange to those who have learned the same phrases in the same travail of spirit. One cannot stand upon a pedestal and pointing with raised forefinger, say, "Go to Jesus." The injunction which should rise from Christian lips is "Come to Jesus." And the words are futile unless we have traveled the same way. Billy Sunday makes Christ real to the sodden bum because he saw Christ once through the blear eyes of a defeated drifter. And no man has a right to deplore such preaching until he can move bums in the same effective way by a more sophisticated appeal. Every limitation be-

comes an open roadway into the hearts of those who have felt the same limitation.

Sir Arthur Pearson is stricken blind at the height of an amazing career of usefulness. There must have been moments of bitter unwillingness in his soul. He must have prayed that the cup pass from his lips. But the oncoming days brought him quiet of mind, and he found that his blindness might be a key to a hitherto forbidden portal of usefulness. He could minister as no seeing man ever could to the needs of England's blind. When the war began to pour back upon Britain the pitiful flood of sightless soldiers, Sir Arthur Pearson took them under his care, showed them that life was not irrevocably spoiled by loss of sight, and taught them the technique of successful living under the hitherto crippling handicap. He had made a pearl out of his blindness.

J. M. Barrie's beautiful tribute to his mother is replete with instances of similar triumphs. His first chapter is called "How My Mother Got Her Soft Face." He tells the story of the death of her first-born son. When the terror of that dark day has penetrated our souls, Barrie says,

> That is how she got her soft face and her pathetic ways and her large charity, and why other mothers ran to her when they had lost a child. "Dinna greet, poor Janet," she would say to them, and they would answer, "Ah, Margaret, but you're greeting yoursel'."

She had made a pearl of her grief, and other mothers came to her when they had lost a child.

It was a terrifying crisis which made Lincoln

president. He came to Cooper Union with a manuscript speech, copies of which had been circulated to the newspapers in advance of his appearance. He began to read carefully and precisely what he had written. The great crowd grew restless. Voices from the back of the hall shouted, "Louder! Louder!" The situation was becoming a farce. Then in his nervousness, he dropped one of the manuscript sheets. It fluttered from the platform beyond his reach. Panic-stricken for a moment at the unbelievable disaster, he looked out over the crowd, tossed aside the remaining sheets of his address, smiled, swung out his long arms in the first free gesture of the evening, and let himself go, while the audience was melted into a shouting mass of enthusiastic approval. He had not only told them what he thought about politics. He had proved to them that he knew how to make a pearl. And the way he met the crisis spread as fast as the sober statesmanship of his speech.

Christians, we shall not examine your own troubles and annoyances. You know them too well already. But whatever they are today, and whatever they seem to be tomorrow, there is but one way of dealing with them. Fight them off with all your might. Beseech God thrice that they depart. Then if they stay, garb them with the beauty of patience, and thank God for the chance to make a pearl.

VII

WHY I AM A CHRISTIAN

Text: And he saith unto them, "But who say ye that I am?" And Peter answereth and sayeth unto him, "Thou art the Christ."—Mark 8 : 29.

I was once converted. Years ago, in the midst of the thronging experiences of boyhood, Jesus my Saviour came to me. My fears were banished, my best hopes were confirmed, my cowardice left me, my intimations of courage grew, the world left off its somber aspect of fearfulness which it had worn, conflicting motives and hesitations became resolved in the unity of a happy trust, my sins were forgiven, and I came to realize the unspeakable joy of that forgiveness; best of all, I found in Jesus that hero, that comrade, the inspirer and helper, the need of every boy. I cannot banish from my mind the memory of the night on which I confessed him by baptism. The symbol was made so vivid for me, the rite was such a natural expression, and when the service was completed and the sermon had been preached, and I had returned to the church auditorium, clothed again, looking like the same boy, I suppose, but ever so different in the reality of my experience, I stood near a little reed-organ, and held on to the rococo wood scrolling which passed for decoration, and in the ecstasy of my unexpected

joy, I lifted my quavering boyish soprano voice and sang as naturally as ever bird sings, "Children, give your hearts to Jesus, in the happy days of youth!" But I am a Christian now not merely because I was once converted.

I joined the church once. The scenes are as real to me as if they had taken place but yesterday. A solemn meeting of a board of deacons stands out in my memory largely as an aggregation of stiff starched shirts, for I had never seen so many "boiled bosom-fronts" in any one place before. In all that group of friendly but not overencouraging examiners, the one point of relief and confidence was the presence of my father, who was deacon as well as father, and hence was eligible to come to my aid. He it was who parried theological questions for me, it was his jolly chuckle which broke the stillness of my embarrassment and made me feel at home. I answered as best I could, but I recall that my mind was impatient to be done with this preliminary, for I wanted to join the church. I wanted to become a part of the enterprise which had acquainted me with Jesus. I wanted to share in the plans and purposes of this group which had absorbed so much of my parents' lives. This was a wish entirely aside from my wish to confess Christ. There were two distinct transactions for me.

And if I had not joined the church just then, I am sure I should want to join now. For I cannot imagine myself living in a city without churches. I love to see children flocking happily to Sunday

school. I watch with joy those glad processions of eager worshipers go thronging to the open doors which lead to sanctuaries. I myself anticipate the absorption of the nourishment which the church provides each week for my own soul. And I know that the things for which I stand in civic and moral life are the things for which the church is battling, whether I am a part of the church or not. If these reasons did not satisfy me, I should still be eager to join the church for the sheer benefits which the church would bring to me. It offers me the fraternity of people whom I enjoy, on terms of utter democracy. It gives me entrée and welcome in every city to which my journeys take me. It places me at once in the heart of a congenial fellowship. And whatever my business, it helps my business, in so far as my business is a legitimate and a decent one. But I was not then, nor would I be now, a Christian because I want to join the church. I have not dolefully assumed a name and a sign for the sake of the institution which operates in that name and on behalf of that sign. I am not a Christian for the purpose of church-membership.

I am a Christian because I am eager to express my personal loyalty to Jesus. He saved me, I shall never forget that. But my Christianity is no unwilling loyalty in gratitude for a past accomplishment. I love the church, but my Christianity is no passport into a comparatively desirable set. I am proud of my faith, for it is only another way of saying that Jesus is my present Master and my allegiance to him is an unfeigned and exultant pledge.

For me, he has shown the way of life. All that I know about successful living I owe to him. The sense of exuberant joy which was mine when my boyish heart claimed him as friend was but the beginning of a life of newly revealed masteries. He knows life. He knows God. He knows man. And he knows all three so surely that he has been able to say the secrets of life and of God in terms intelligible to my own poor mind. What can I do but acknowledge him! Why should I hesitate to name him! I love the Christ. I follow in his way. I learn his truth. I crave his power. I long to make him real to others who have not found him. I am a Christian. For this is what a Christian is.

Propose if you will certain doctrinal tests for Christians. Insist that a man has no right to claim to be a Christian unless he can recite a stipulated number of creedal articles. And I reply that creedal articles without this present allegiance to the way of Jesus, are utterly futile. Meanwhile a man may never have heard of a creed, and yet be possessed of this life-commitment to Christ's way. Erect church barriers if you will, and insist that Christians will all be found within the enclosures which you have marked out. And I shall reply by showing you non-Christians inside the space, and hosts of men and women committed to his way outside the sectarian fences which you have erected.

No one can rob me of those colorful memories, still vivid after the years, memories of that glory which came into my ken when I saw King Jesus and was unafraid. No one can deprive me of

my happy comradeship in the confines of the Christian church. But I am a Christian because I am today frank and happy in my statement of loyalty to him and to the things which he has taught.

I love the Christ of yesterday, and the men who proclaim that we must go back to Jesus find no unfavorable reaction in me. Go back as far as you will to him, and I find myself loving him. Go to the Christ of the Gospels, and meet him face to face. I love those quiet years of unpretentious silence, with the other boys of the village, and with the men of the shop. I love the simple months when he lived so naturally that his neighbors in after years could ask naively, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" in those incredulous tones which "hometowns" have used since the beginning of time. I love those forty testing days of temptation, when he looked out upon all the possibilities of his career and fought through the battles in anticipation, vanquishing the wild beasts of the spirit, through the help of the angels of light. I love those full months of "doing good," while he fearlessly proclaimed the amazing truths which God had revealed to him. I love the compacted weeks of his preparation and suffering. I see him on the cross, dying that his kingdom of truth and light might be preserved without compromise or failure through the centuries until today and tomorrow. I see him rallying his scattered ones by the assurance of his victory over death and time. The fragrance of his life escapes in the foolishness of the retelling. But I go back to the sacred words of the simple narratives,

and find him there again, the fairest, friendliest figure that has ever crossed the minds of seeking men. I have no other words for it. I love him. There may be other heroes and other comrades for other men. But for me, he is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and I say so by my faith.

I love him in the yesterdays of history. There have been ages which have obscured him. Dreadful things of darkness and hate have been done in his name. His spirit has been invoked over scenes of cowardice and carnage. But wherever his figure stands out above the flames and smoke of men's jealousies and bitterness, I cannot but love him. I love him as he touches Peter with the forgiveness of the new consecration. I love him as he wins Paul and makes a hero out of a bully. I love him as he anoints Luther in the secret places of personal dedication. I love him as he places the coal of fire upon the humble lips of Wesley. I love him as he sends Father Damien out into the hell of leper-agony. I love him as he reclaims China by the graces of a hundred hidden lives. When I see him in the yesterday, my heart is humbled, and my spirit bows unbidden, as before my King.

I love him in the plain sight of today. Even here I find travesties of him parading his name and his sign. But I love him as his people serve him in the simplicity of their helpfulness when need calls. I honor him when I hear Hoover, beset by a hungry world, turn to the church of Jesus as the only resort.

I love him as he ministers to individual seekers all

around me. I love to see him touch souls as he touched mine, and turn all their blindness into sight, all their sighing into songs, all their burdens into wings, all their tears into pearls of beauty. Here comes a woman, recently confessing him in baptism, now leading two younger women into the meeting where they too are to join his ranks. There is a smile of heavenly joy on her face, and a message of heavenly happiness on her lips: "Oh, I cannot tell you! It has changed my whole life. My home is a new place!" Then I turn to the Christ and love him anew. Here comes a sturdy business man, who has attended church for six years, and last Sunday confessed Jesus in the symbol of burial to sin and resurrection to newness of life in the Saviour. He takes my hand and grips it firmly while he says, "I want you to know, sir, that these days have been the happiest days of all my life!"

Then I seem to see Jesus, the Jesus of Nazareth, the Jesus of history, the Jesus of the prosaic today, the Jesus of the conquering tomorrow. There is patience and joy in his gentle, brave eyes, and I think he is smiling too as he hears me say, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." Lead on, we follow Thee.

If Jesus Christ is a man,—
And only a man,—I say
That of all mankind I cleave to Him,
And to Him will I cleave alway.

If Jesus Christ is a God,—
And the only God,—I swear
I will follow Him through heaven and hell,
The earth, the sea, and the air.

VIII

A PREACHER UNASHAMED

Text: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."—Romans 1 : 16.

We live in a world which seems to be engaged in a gigantic conspiracy to make a preacher feel ashamed. The crux of the matter of scarcity in prophet-material may be located at this exact spot. The movies never place a preacher on the screen without a sneer, unless they are deliberately catering to church trade and do not dare really express themselves. Cartoonists choose a scathingly pitiful type when they are forced to represent the sentiment of the clergy. Scandalously low salary levels in average computations place the calling at the very bottom of the list in the eyes of men who see significance in money returns. Clergy-fare books offering a fractional fare to those who will go through the indignities involved, not only in applying but also in purchasing and presenting tickets after the privilege has been granted, have become an absolute necessity for thousands of preachers if they are to do their duty without pauperism or private fortune. Discounts offered in stores which are conscious of beautiful charity and have a right to all the credit they can get, make clergymen feel like dependents upon the industrial organism. And

when a young man of any particular promise threatens to enter the ministry, there are some pious prayers of thanksgiving, and some saintly words of encouragement, but the people of affairs on whose word he relies for substantial judgment in other realms flood him with commiseration and pity. His college class is aghast at the pitiable waste of possibilities. His relatives sacrifice him with many tears, as if he were entering a lions' den. The highway into the ministry is hung with drooping crêpe and echoes with the lugubrious strains of Chopin's "Funeral March."

Perhaps it is better so. Perhaps unworthy men, who had not caught the significance of the cross of Jesus, might be lured mistakenly down the road into the sacred calling, if there were less gloom spread about the entrance. And that, of course, would never do. We need heroes in the ministry. And we have succeeded in making it almost forbidding enough to ensure the exclusion of anybody else. Maybe a frank confession of the joy which awaits the preacher would be too much for the other professions, which must have men from some source, and would be utterly distressed if the ministry took all the promising youths.

But the tragedy of the present situation is revealed when one examines what happens to the ministers, once they have passed the mystic gate which excludes all but heroes. The initiation over, one might suppose that they would be allowed to see things fairly and enjoy their fate. Not so. They are hounded by their humiliations. They are

expected to dress in some distinctive garb so as to make possible a certain lowering of the voice when they appear. They are set off in a corner, as if they were too good for the common exchange of men's conversation, but in reality they are being put to bed like young children, when the adults really get down to business. Is it any wonder that after the years, they begin to show the tragic droop of the shoulders and the pulpit smile with which the cartoonists have endowed them? Is it any wonthat they become somewhat accustomed to an unprotested compliance with the conditions of banishment? The world has its way with them. Pity has its just fruition in pitiableness. And preachers grow ashamed.

Like a chill breeze from a snow-capped mountain hurling itself into the sun-kissed languor of a Mexican noon, comes the text of Paul, "I am not ashamed!" It wakes us, and sends cold shivers down our torpid spines, and gets us up from our siesta of humility in a moment of rousing. "I am not ashamed."

It was defiance hurled at pagan Rome, in the name of the Master of men. But modern preachers must take it upon their own lips, or the church of Jesus will suffer shame and defeat. God helping me, I shall never make craven apology for my profession. Wall Street puts rich Rome to insignificance. The might of modern world-encircling nations can make imperial Rome into a petty province. The comforts and ingenious devices of a Roman neighborhood become crudities of a childish blunder when com-

pared with the necessities of a modern home. And all the knowledge of Rome seems like the first sentences of a child's primer, when we survey the continents of truth which men's minds have explored since then.

Yet I can utter, fearlessly, to a civilization whose glory dwarfs the boasts of Paul's metropolis, the defiance of his own lips, " I am not ashamed." Men tell me that this is an unprecedented age of organized contribution to the treasure-house of general wealth. They say that no man has a right to survive unless he can produce. They say that the drones in the hive must be driven out by the slow process of economic elimination, and they look at me with sinister intent, satisfied in their own minds as they see ministers' salaries being cut to the starvation-point. But I defy them. Their talk sounds like an echo from wealth-cursed Rome. There is no man who works harder and who contributes more to the wealth of the world than the intelligent and enthusiastic Christian minister. Give us a few more years, and the pendulum which is now unfair toward the ministry will swing the other way. It is even now on the downward stroke and a new generation will confirm the ministry with economic tribute to its producing and conserving power. Babson's words are not drivel.

Before the magnificent array of imperialistic national ambitions, and the flaunting beauty of majesty, I preach Jesus, unashamed. For his kingdom has seen the boasts of other empires become empty vaporings, and the cities of ancient monarchs

become heaps of dust. Before the soft comforts of this amazingly ingenious age, I preach Jesus unashamed, for I know that faith in him has made life glorious in prison cells and solitary caves of persecution; and that men who tried to live without him have had their transient joys turn to ashes at their tastes. Before a world wise with the wonder of science and discovery, inquiring, revealing, searching, arranging, labeling, and docketing, I preach Jesus unashamed. For I know that the knowledge which he teaches is as eternal as the hills, as necessary as bread and water to the life of the soul, fundamental in its underlying of all other truth, and ministering to the whole world of truth-seekers.

But best of all, I preach Jesus unashamed, even when I hear the happy achieving boasts of men who are tasting the delights of other work. When men grow rich around me, I count the gold of souls won to him. When men count fame as their portion, I find my glory in the oncoming victory of Jesus. When men talk to me of the thrill of invention, I bend my mind to the translation of his way into word and life. And when they sing of joy, I show them a letter which came to me yesterday, a letter from a traveling man who wandered into my church with a companion, both of them strangers in a strange city last Sunday. They sat in the far corner of the gallery throughout the service, and left at the benediction, to walk and talk through the long afternoon about the substance of the gospel which they had heard preached. The companion

had been strangely impressed with the claims of Jesus, and told of his frank and sudden loyalty. Twenty-four hours later, he was killed in a railway accident, rejoicing that the few moments of preaching had solved for him the hitherto inexplicable riddle of a baffling life.

There is no joy to compare with the joy of the preacher. Hear it, young men, from honest lips, made eloquent by their honest joy. I preach Christ, unashamed. And I open the garlanded gate, into a calling that touches the heights of happiness.

IX

RELIGION AT TWENTY-ONE

Text: When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street, the young men saw me and hid themselves.—Job 29 : 7, 8.

It was my privilege not long ago to spend a year in the midst of a people who are at the critical center of our Christian mission problem. I went to them not as preacher or teacher, but as a native of their land. For a whole year I spoke their tongue, dressed in their attire, governed myself by their customs, in fact, was one of them. My stay with them was so recent, and my sympathy for them is now so vivid and vital, that I wish to make a frank report of my findings to you. For you are interested in their tribal habits, and in their ultimate destiny.

I have heard travelers tell of the weird procedures which are common-place in that land. I have heard colorful descriptions of the polyglot language which the natives use, of the weird music which stirs their souls, of the bizarre and fantastic forms of dress which are flaunted before the eyes of onlookers, and of the grotesque social customs which affront our more cultured civilization. I have recognized each

detail of description as real, but when these travelers have gone on to say that the inhabitants of this land are so different that they must be headed straight for destruction, then I have been sure that their conclusions were the results of hasty visits. Perhaps these travelers had never penetrated into the heart of the life of that nation, perhaps they had never lived in the confines of that mysterious land at all, or if they had lived there they had forgotten all about it. And a quick careless glance at the superficial surface had fooled them into an unfair conclusion. I bring you cheer, as fellow Christians. These stubborn, elusive, difficult people, who do not speak our tongue and do not think our thoughts, may yet be brought under the sway of Jesus, if we are careful in our translating and patient in our teaching.

The land to which I refer is a State of Mind. It is bounded on the north by Youth's Courage, and on the south by Youth's Enthusiasm. It stretches on the west toward Youth's Pioneering, and on the east toward Youth's Dreams. It is the country known as 21. However far any of you may be from it now, most of you have lived there for a little while once upon a time.

I could dwell on many phases of its life. I might tell of that strange mental freak which leads the natives to change their style of dress with each new year, so that photographs showing the costumes of the ten last seasons would make one believe that ten different tribes were on exhibition. High pompadours, elaborate and intricate coiffures,

severe tight simplicity, and boyish bobbed locks—these are the changing head-dress styles; small hats, large hats, and no hats at all; long trailing skirts that sweep the ground, short skirts that give freedom and grace—these follow one another through the ceaseless succession of dress-habits which might lead you to believe that 21 lacked stability of judgment. I might tell you of their language, which uses the same vowels and consonants in the same combinations as ours, but which results in wholly different meanings, so that between the natives of 21 and ourselves there exists a language-gap as wide and as serious as that between China and America. But I hasten without apology to a consideration of the theme which has occupied my attention since I have returned from my sojourn in 21—the religion of 21. For you are Christians, somewhat discouraged at the indifference which these blasé natives are showing toward your sincere missionary efforts. And you want to understand the difficulty. I think I have the right to assume this.

There has been in the past a rather curious tendency to scorn the missionary opportunity which 21 presented. Job is a striking example of this attitude. The text which you have already noticed is plucked from Job's memories of his former bliss. Out of his present misery, he is looking back upon the good old days of his prosperity. And the climax of his glowing description occurs when he comments on his faith and his piety. He recalls with deep gratitude that when he was at his best religiously, he had only to walk down the street and

the young men gathered at the street-corners would flee at his coming. This was an approach to a lively religious ideal. Job was positively proud that his piety sent youth off in howling dismay.

There may be Christians who feel that way about it now. 21 is so noisy, so boisterous, so careless of incense-odor and the solemn quiet of the sanctuary. Maybe you would prefer to have young people flee before you. You may deem their disdain a subtle compliment to your faith. If so, 21 will not quarrel with you. You may have your own way. They will leave you and never bother you again.

But if you really care, if you are sorry that such a magnificent stratum of life has been comparatively untouched by the program of the church, you may be willing to hear, from a sympathetic interpreter, what 21 wants in religion.

For one thing, 21 demands enthusiasm. The cool, shadowy faith of quiet formalism, the calculating contentment of the church which counts a year well spent if it has recorded no startling losses in membership, the sophisticated aloofness of those who are happy to be saved and have no sense of the tragedy of a world's misery and darkness—these things repel 21. If religion means anything, it must mean a consuming dedication to an insistent propaganda of faith, and where the consuming dedication is absent, 21 concludes with ruthless logic that religion does not mean anything. Given a church which dares to dream no meaner dream than a city captured by the forces of the

Christ, and you will find 21 manifesting signs of eager interest.

The new generation demands fearlessness. It has been taught to believe that if a theory or an institution shows signs of shrinking and embarrassment when faced by unbiased and cold investigation and comparison, there is something unworthy which accounts for the shrinking. It demands a religious faith which proscribes no books, prohibits no courses of study, bans no contacts with the ever-widening horizons of the world's knowledge, erects no walls about itself, but frankly and fearlessly welcomes every fair question. It instinctively shuns the religion which may be observed only under a vacuum-bell in controlled laboratory conditions. 21 wants a chance to test and try, and the things which are not willing to submit are simply shelved.

The youngsters demand affirmatives. There is something repellent to them in a religious faith which boasts as its supreme attraction a carefully indexed catalog of prohibitions. They are not enormously impressed with a list of things one must not do, and the penalties which ensue if one does. But they do show signs of eager life when they are confronted with an ideal of what one can do, and some friendly counsel as to how one can be helped in the doing.

Indeed, they do not quite understand what our negatives mean. We were noticing a few moments ago the language of 21, and the difficulties it presents to foreigners. Nowhere is this language-gap more obvious than here in the realm of affirma-

tives and negatives. I have a daughter who is just 21—twenty-one months, of course. And already she is beginning to show the characteristics of the tribe into which she will later be initiated. We adults realize that a sharply spoken staccato "No, no, no, no, no!" means: "Darling, it would be better for you not to touch that. Daddy and mother know that it will hurt you." But do you think those syllables of warning are thus interpreted by her learning mind? You are mistaken if you do. When she hears a "No" it means to her: "Hello, here's something extraordinarily promising. This is going to be more interesting than usual. They always give me that signal when I start into anything which looks like real fun. Then they always try to stop me. I must be quick and dip into this before they start after me." And into it she dips, forthwith.

You may be tempted to list her as an example of total depravity. But I tell you that she simply does not understand our language. And we are fools, unworthy of her promise, if we grow impatient and pettish, and do not seize the opportunity to translate our futile "No" into a happy, smiling "Yes" which points in a more promising and less perilous direction, for her interest.

And all you "Nay-sayers" who have worn out your vocal chords and your nerves prohibiting 21 from explorations upon which they immediately entered with joy and singing, take notice. They were not trampling on you. They did not know what your "No" meant. And the pity of it is that you

blamed them instead of buckling down to the terrific task of achieving a proper and meaningful translation in the native affirmative vocabulary of 21. Christians, now that you have wrought out after years of toil translations of the Gospels which make Jesus real and appealing to Chinese, and Japanese, and Turks, and Czecho-Slavs, and two hundred other dialectic groups, more or less, will you try to make an interesting and tempting translation of Jesus into the native tongue of 21? They will listen, if you will talk their language, even if you do fumble over their peculiar idioms, and miss some of their expressive grammatical constructions.

Remember that they are utterly indifferent about promised and inflicted punishments, but if sins appear to hinder them on the way to the achievement of fulness of life, they will pause a bit, and go back. The nagging "Don't" of outworn pedagogy is not religion to them, but they are ready for a glorious, forward-looking "Do."

21 makes its last demand when it insists that religion treat of life as well as death. It is not unmindful of the transitory nature of material things; it does not overlook the immortality of lives well-lived; it has not lost its pity for those oppressed by loneliness when a loved one has departed. But some of the spectral blue light of mystery and uncanniness which once played about the fact of death has been removed from their minds. The new generation has seen too many of its contemporaries die, and that at the glad height of a glorious selfless adventure, to feel the need of a religion which is

satisfied with relieving the pall of death. It has little patience with those who are so intent upon the melodies of glorified Zion that they have no ears for the pity of the slums. It demands a faith which is willing to be judged on the way it prepares men for the life of tomorrow, as well as for the death of the day after.

You are drawing back now in your cool reserve, and you are saying quite icily: "We cannot change the truth to suit anybody. We must preach and teach and live what we believe without compromise. And if 21 does not like it, we are not at fault. 21 may want what it calls enthusiasm and fearlessness and affirmatives and life. But we can give them only the good old gospel of Jesus, and leave the issues to God."

Then 21 is proud of you. The youngsters would be ashamed of you if you offered to compromise your faith for anybody. But they go on seeking, still, a religious faith which they in turn can avow without compromise or reservation. And they are finding that they have not far to go in their search. They are reaching their goal in the faith of that same Jesus who is dear to you.

Enthusiasm? His passion consumed him! Fearlessness? He dodged no question, erected no tabu, was disappointed only when a question remained unasked in a seeker's mind through embarrassment! Affirmatives? He cut across a whole complicated code of terrifying prohibitions with specific penalties attached, and uttered his commandments in two glorious affirmatives of love.

Life? Always he preached to the problems of living, and his dying prayer was a sentence of satisfaction at the completion of the task of life which had filled his mind and soul, and at the confidence which such life gave him for the rest.

Have we forgotten that he died, a young man surrounded by young men? Have we forgotten that his language is enlivened at every point by the vivid words and idioms of 21? Have we so libelled him in our preaching and our institutions and our piety that the searching, eager natives of 21 have consigned him to the far distant limbo of "after 40"?

Forgive us, 21. He is yours. Claim him, serve him, love him, live for him! Prove to us once again the eternal youth of the Christ!

X

HOW TO MAKE THE SUN STAND STILL

Text: And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies.—Joshua 10 : 13.

There was no day quite like it, before it, or after it.

Word had come to Joshua that the kings had come down out of their mountain fastnesses, and were threatening to take Gibeon. The messengers from the besieged city were breathless in their haste and their fear: "Slack not thy hand. Come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us!" The words stumble over one another in their haste. And Joshua slacks not. Without a moment's delay, he summons his army into battle array. He tells them the urgent necessity of haste. It is late afternoon, but he is unwilling to wait until morning to start. He knows that one more day will mean capture of the precious town. Into the shadows of the evening he marches his mighty men of valor, and all through the hours of the night they hurry over hill and vale from Gilgal to Gibeon, tireless in their eagerness for the fray.

Morning comes. The kings of the Amorites, who have come down from the hills, make ready

for their easy advance. The city which is their prey, lies before them in the dawn-light like a rich jewel ready to be claimed for their glory. But there is dust in a great cloud along the Gilgal road. There is the low thunder of human voices. There are shouts of recognition and glad acclaim from the valley. The little city is alive with eager preparation. Joshua and his hosts have come! There will be a fight for the prize.

The travel-stained army from Gilgal takes no time for rest. They brush the darkness away from their eyes, take one look at the besieging hosts, and hurl themselves with shouts of confidence into the fray. Tired beyond their realization, they are new men in the fierce agony of battle.

But the foes are no untrained boys. These Amorites have much stuff in them. The lines sway backward and forward as the day toils on. The city is captured and saved, and captured and saved again, as the tides of battle change. The sun is dropping low toward the west. Joshua knows that they must win now or not at all. And the moments are fleeting by like scared things. An hour more, and it will be too late. These tired bodies and exhausted minds would be utterly at a loss tomorrow. He fights on with his men, but as he fights, he prays: "A little more time, Lord. Keep the sun high until we win."

And the sun stood still, and the moon delayed in her coming. Is not this written in the book of Jasher?

Of course, the great difficulty about the story is

the undoubted fact that in a universe of thronging planets and intricate time-calculations, the pausing of the sun and the moon while Joshua fought his battle is not as simple a thing as it at first appears. Secondly, it is now obvious that as far as the earth is concerned the sun is always standing comparatively still, and the day could be prolonged not at all by an obliging hesitation on the part of the sun. The earth would find it necessary to cease in its regular rotation upon its axis in order to make daylight accessible beyond the usual period. And thirdly, exact measurement of the length of the day was quite impossible. Watch companies have recently engaged in an advertising campaign to stimulate interest in the history of time-keeping devices. They have revealed to us how startlingly recent are accurate time-measurements, and how crude were the best devices of ancient man. Ropes which burned with fair regularity, hour-glasses with sand in them, sun-dial arrangements, these were the finest flower of yesterday's inventive genius. And even these were denied to Joshua, for he was not the kind of a warrior to take up a position off at one side of the conflict and there carefully study the progress of the afternoon on a dial. He was in the thick of the fight. How was he measuring time? How could he know that the sun stood still? How was he recording the altogether unusual events of the unusual day?

He was using the most accurate measure of time which has ever been devised: *deeds*. He was measuring hours by accomplishments. And when

the sun drooped low over the western hills, and evening was almost upon him, he did pray that the sun might stand still, so that he might fight through to victory. Then he flung himself from his prayer into the heat of the battle, and his mighty enthusiasm so communicated itself to his men that they made those few moments of dusk count for more than had the whole day before, and the kings of the Amorites turned and fled, and the city was saved. And as the hosts of Joshua gathered round the camp-fire with their leader that night, and he told them of his prayer, they said to one another: "The prayer was answered. The sun did stand still. That last hour seemed like a whole day. What do we care about the futile denials of orderly solar systems and artificial time-scales. Hours are long or short as you fill them full or leave them bare of accomplishment. Surely the Lord fought for Gibeon. There was never day quite like this."

Time is never fairly measured by the numbers of times a hand traverses the face of a clock. Time has length and breadth and depth, and the man who measures only length is absolutely deceived. Which was the older? Roosevelt, or that old woman who died at 104, after quiet backwoods existence? Which had lived the most of life? I have seen a football team make the last few minutes of the last quarter into a longer period than would encompass all the play before.

And I have made the sun stand still. Have you never felt the exhilaration of the experience? To face an almost impossible task, to know the merci-

less onrush of the end of the day, to lift your heart in prayer for a few more minutes of daylight, and then to swing so much of life into those few moments that they become hours under the touch of your dauntless willingness, this entitles you to a place with Joshua.

APPENDIX

THE SERMONS OF THE SECOND YEAR

A similar experiment, carried on at the end of the second year's preaching, involved the use of the following list. First place was awarded to Sermon 70, "An Adventure in Friendliness," a verse by verse exposition of the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, using a rough and immediate verbal translation from the Greek text; second place went to Sermon 76, "The Good Fortune of Bad Luck," a discussion of the uses of adversity in human life; while third place was given to Sermon 5, "On Distance in Religion," which was the favorite of the first year, and was included in the second-year list only because the vote of the congregation had forced its repetition. Three sermons were repeated as a result of the second ballots.

1. HENCEFORTH. Text: Ephesians 4 : 14.

"The Christian's eyes are fixed upon the dawn of a tomorrow."

2. 1922 WILL REWARD FIGHTERS. Text: Romans 5 : 3.

"No follower of Jesus can pray a craven prayer for a soft year."

3. THE FOLLY OF VAIN REGRETS. Text: Psalm 103: 12.

"The only proper fruit of failure is not regret, but wisdom for the next attempt."

4. DO YOU LISTEN FOR ANGELS? Text: Acts 8 : 29.

"There are angels speaking today to us, as plainly as they spoke to Philip in the far-off yesterday."

5. On Distance in Religion. Text: John 4 : 4-26.

"Three Negro songs can teach us the secret of nearness to God." (Repeated by request from last year's preaching.)

6. Trade-Eyes. Text: 1 John 4 : 21.

"We see each other through the eyes of our trade. And the Christian has trade-eyes of his own."

7. How to Make a Pearl. Text: 2 Corinthians 12 : 7-10.

"A pearl is the garment of patience wrapped around an annoyance." (Repeated by request from last year's preaching.)

8. Palm Sunday Christians. Text: Matthew 21 : 8-11.

"A few hours separate the 'Hosannas' of Palm Sunday from the angry shouts of 'Crucify Him!'"

9. The Easter Triumph. Text: 1 Corinthians 15 : 55-57.

"The resurrection is proven or disproven by the quality of the disciple's life."

10. If Time Were Money. Text: Colossians 4 : 5.

"Time is money—the most precious currency in life."

11. The We-ness of Us. Text: 1 Corinthians 12 : 12.

"'He's not heavy, sir! He's my brother!'" (Repeated by request from last year's preaching.)

12. Brother Saul. Text: Acts 22 : 13.

"This was a splendid gesture of love which saw in that broken enemy of the cross a potential brother."

13. Take Your Choice. Text: Romans 7 : 15.

"'I have to live with myself, and so I want to be fit for myself to know.'" (Repeated by request from last year's preaching.)

14. The Other Side of the Road. Text: Luke 10 : 31-33.

"The magnetism of need versus the magnetism of comfort."

15. Says I, to Myself. Text: Psalm 19 : 12.

"What kind of a man are you when you talk to yourself?" (Repeated by request from last year's preaching.)

16. If Luther Lived Today. Text: Romans 1 : 17.

"There are new battles for liberty of soul which require the spirit of Luther."

17. The Baptist Church On Main Street. Text: Revelation 3 : 8.

"Against heart-breaking odds, the preachers on Main Street battle for the truth. Help them!"

18. The Hand That Rocks the Cradle. Text: Proverbs 31 : 30.

"Motherhood holds the destiny of America in its hands."

19. A Fool and His Money. Text: Proverbs 21 : 20.

"A fool is at the mercy of his money—or lack of it."

20. A Fathers' Day Sermon. Text: Proverbs 23: 15-23.

"There is need for sound advice on the problem of choosing a father."

21. Christ and Healing. Text: 2 Corinthians 12 : 7-10.

"Jesus healed—but he seemed to fear the results of his helpfulness on the issues of his Kingdom."

22. The Cold, Cold World. Text: Hebrews 13 : 8.

"The Senior who leaves college finds the world no colder than the school."

23. America Does Not Forget.

"Memorial Day is a perpetual pledge of the faithful remembrance of America."

24. At the Heart of Things. Text: Acts 9 : 4.

"Have mercy on things. There are souls hidden beneath the surface."

25. The Power of Kindness. Text: Proverbs 15: 1.

"There is no more mighty force in the universe than the simple quality of kindness."

26. The Crime of Competitive Armament. Text: Isaiah 2 : 1-5.

"War is the fiendish extension of claws and hoofs and teeth and fangs."

27. Children's Day.

"'The other side of every cloud the sun is shining.'"

28. Can Christianity Fail? Text: Galatians 2 : 5.

"The solemn responsibility for the whole battle-line must rest on the heart of every Christian."

29. Why I Am Proud of Syracuse. Text: Revelation 21.

"Her achievements are many and great; but I love her for her promise."

30. Under Two Flags. Text: Psalm 20 : 5.

"There is only one banner for the church; any other allegiance is treachery."

31. The Joy of Thy Lord. Text: Matthew 25 : 21.

"Work—more work—still more work—these are the successive rewards from Christ."

32. If. Text: Luke 7 : 36-50.

"He does know our shortcomings—and yet he loves."

33. The Legend of the Lake.

"A sanctuary where all feuds and rivalries are forgotten, and all beauties are shared in friendship."

34. Perils on the Heights.

"Men cannot climb very high without endangering their humility and their friendliness."

35. Great is Diana of the Americans. Text: Acts 19 : 34.

"What is the goddess whose silver statues make our business?"

36. Labor vs. Capital. Where Stands the Church? Text: Colossians 3 : 11.

"Too long has the church balanced itself carefully between two extremes."

37. Lord, Is It I? Text: Joshua 7.

"Am I hindering the coming of victory?"

38. Too Much Speed. Text: Mark 4 : 28, 29.

"No generation in history has lived at a faster pace."

39. Three Baptist Men at the Heart of the World. Text: Daniel 3.

"May there be the figure of the Son of Man visible in the flames."

40. The Blunder of Bluff. Text: Matthew 23 : 27.

"Alice Adams, the most pathetic figure of modern fiction, is a victim of the allurements of bluff."

41. Light Invincible. Text: John 1 : 5.

"Darkness cannot batter it down. We see a star through billions of miles of darkness."

42. Lessons from My Ford. Text: Proverbs 16 : 32.

"Watch your gas, watch your radiator, watch your oil."

43. Doorkeepers of the Lord. Text: Psalm 84 : 10.

"This church is built upon the hidden service of humble doorkeepers."

44. One Wasted Year. Text: 1 Samuel 13 : 1.

"A year of idleness spreads its failure over all of life."

45. A Twentieth Century Parable. Text: Mark 13 : 34.

"Would Jesus tell us stories of ourselves?"

46. Beams and Motes. Text: Matthew 7 : 4.

"How easy it is to prescribe for our neighbor's faults! How difficult to look steadily in a moral mirror!"

47. Money. Text: 1 Timothy 6: 10.

"Money is the miracle of modern communication."

48. Colgate to Syracuse. Text: Proverbs 3 : 13.

"The defeats of yesterday will not hurt us tomorrow."

49. The Acid Test of Discipleship. Text: Mark 10 : 22.

"A drop of acid tells the story—gold or base metal."

50. The Best Story in the World.

"The wistful tale of the boy who ran away and the father who waited."

51. The Zero Hour. Text: Exodus 14 : 15.

"Our first real battle since the new captain came."

52. Shall the Church Charge Admission? Text: 2 Thessalonians 3 : 1.

"Not if one seeking soul would be shut out."

53. How to Change the World. Text: Isaiah 28 : 9, 10.

"Patience—line upon line—precept upon precept—courage!"

54. The Big Game. Text: Hebrews 12 : 1.

"Football is a tiny atom when compared with the game of life."

55. The United States Then Being in a State of War. Text: 2 Timothy 2 : 13.

"Every color is heightened by the presence of war."

56. A Portrait of a Good Sport. Text: 2 Timothy 4: 7.

"A modern ideal with inspiration in it."

57. How not to be Thankful. Text: Luke 18 : 11.

"Do not demand a background of misery for your own joy."

58. The Strategy of Foch. Text: Proverbs 16 : 32.

"Remember the Marne and Ferdinand Foch."

59. Excommunication. Text: 1 Corinthians 11 : 28.

"'He drew a circle and shut me out.
Heretic, scorner, a thing to flout.'"

60. How Much of Christmas Is Christian? Text: Matthew 7 : 23.

"Ask the tired clerks, the overworked postmen, the selfish children, the extravagant parents."

61. Has He Really Come? Text: Matthew 2 : 2.

"Has He been born in you?"

62. Christ, Our Passover. Text: 1 Corinthians 5 : 7, 8.

"The memorial of our deliverance."

63. B. C. AND A. D. THE MESSAGE OF THE CALENDAR. Text: Galatians 4 : 10.

"What is this figure at whose life the world's dates converge?"

64. DENOMINATIONAL DISARMAMENT. Text: John 17 : 20-26.

"The frightful cost of foolish precautions against our Christian brethren."

65. HOW INSANE ARE YOU? 1. THE CALAMITY OF CONFLICT. Text: Romans 7 : 18, 19.

"The hypocrite has started on the road to madness."

66. THE POOR LITTLE RICH GIRL. Text: Matthew 17: 1-10.

"Shall religion be pampered by its misguided friends?"

67. HOW INSANE ARE YOU? 2. THE REFUGE OF REPRESSION. Text: Romans 8 : 10.

"Not less life, but more life in a better direction."

68. THE CHURCH SPEAKS TO THE NEW CHANCELLOR. Text: 2 Chronicles 32: 7.

"Live your faith among us. Show forth Christ."

69. HOW INSANE ARE YOU? 3. THE PERIL OF PROJECTION. Text: Romans 8 : 22, 23.

"Most of our criticism of others is a reflection on ourselves."

70. AN ADVENTURE IN FRIENDLINESS. Text: 1 Corinthians 13.

"Faith, hope, and friendliness, which is greatest?"

71. HOW INSANE ARE YOU? 4. THE FOLLY OF PHANTASY. Text: Romans 8 : 24-28.

"The day-dreamer and the sermon-taster are both showing symptoms of insanity."

72. PITY AND THE POPE. Text: Matthew 16 : 18.

"Encased in heavy robes and tedious traditions, he is a symbol of bewildered tiredness."

73. THE EMINENT SANITY OF JESUS. Text: John 10 : 20.

"Poise—the kingly steadiness of the Christ."

74. The Soul of Lincoln. Text: Matthew 12 : 28-34.

"Would Lincoln join this church?"

75. What It Means to Be a Christian. Text: Philippians 3 : 14.

"To follow the way of Jesus—and to wish to share that way with others."

76. The Good Fortune of Hard Luck. Text: Proverbs 3 : 11, 12.

"There is no strength without discipline."

77. What It Means to Be a Baptist. Text: Psalm 122.

"First one must be a Christian. And then one must love the Baptist ideals."

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